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Boof of Abstracts of the International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality Management

ICTHM 2025

International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality Management

45 anos ISAG European Business School INSTITUTO SUPERIOR DE ADMINISTRAÇÃO E GESTÃO

CICET Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism fundação CONSUELO VIEIRA DA COSTA

UNIAG Unidade de Investigação Aplicada em Gestão

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Presentation: ISAG – European Business School

ISAG -Instituto Superior de Administração e Gestão - is an establishment of private higher education polytechnic, created in October 1979 and officially recognized by Decree-Law nº. 375/87 of 11th December.

As a conclusion of a fusion process started in November 2000, which had as first stage the merger by incorporation of the founding entities ESE/ENFOC in June of 2005, there occurred the merger of ISAG – Instituto Superior de Administração e Gestão and ISAI – Instituto Superior de Assistentes e Intérpretes in a single institution of higher education with the designation of ISAG – Instituto Superior de Administração e Gestão.

ISAG has as fundamental objectives education, the divulgation and the development in the areas of Science Management, Applied Languages, Tourism and Hotel Management in the Northern Region of the Country, through the implementation of a philosophy of higher education that prepares students for the exercise of highly qualified professional activities.

Currently, ISAG takes advantage of a strong image with the business market as an establishment of higher education specialized in the areas referred to above, which means that it has been able to impose itself on the labor market and in the business environment, as a reliable institution and that has been fulfilling its institutional mission. For this purpose, ISAG has been paying constant attention to the needs of the society and the Portuguese economy, giving special consideration to those relevant to the construction of the European Union and globalization of markets. Thus, the institution recently assumed the designation of ISAG – European Business School.

Presentation: Consuelo Vieira da Costa Foundation

The Consuelo Vieira da Costa Foundation (FCVC) is a private and non-profit foundation created on April 3, 2018, and recognized by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on September 21, 2018 (Order No. 9392/2018).

FCVC started its activity on September 13, 2019, with the statutory purposes of carrying out activities to promote, develop and support initiatives of a predominantly social, cultural and scientific research nature, in the fields of teaching, education and professional training.

With these purposes in mind, the Foundation operates in the following areas:

Social | Support for young people in the pursuit of their studies at the level of higher education, through the awarding of Social Scholarships and the awarding of young people with Merit Scholarships.

Education | Creation of the Senior University Consuelo Vieira da Costa.

Culture | Carrying out interventional and inclusion actions in society, enabling access to culture.

Research | Creation of the Center for Research in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET).

Mission

Contribute to the development of society, particularly in the social, cultural, educational and scientific research domains.

Vision

To be identified and recognized as a reference institution at national and international level, oriented towards the promotion and involvement of the community and for the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Values

I. Respect and Humanism

II. Ethics, Responsibility and Social Inclusion

III. Sustainable development

IV. Quality and Innovation

About CICET - FCVC

The Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism, designated by the acronym CICET-FCVC, is a research center without legal personality and non-profit, created by the Consuelo Vieira da Costa Foundation.

CICET is primarily dedicated to promoting and carrying out applied research in the areas of Business Sciences, Hotel Management and Tourism and transversal areas.

CICET-FCVC started its activity in October 2020 and has sought to increase its number of researchers (through the establishment of cooperation protocols), its scientific production, as well as the applicability of its studies in local, regional, and national policies.

FCT accreditation

The center is accredited by the **Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)** and is part of the national network of recognized R&D units, under the reference process UID/06354/2023.

Presentation: International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality Management

Following the success of its previous editions, the *International Workshop on Tourism and Hospitality Management* has evolved into a fully-fledged international conference, now with an extended two-day programme designed to foster academic exchange, knowledge dissemination and professional networking. The *International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality Management (ICTHM2025)* took place on the 10th and 11th of July 2025, at ISAG – European Business School, in collaboration with the Centre for Research in Business Sciences and Tourism of the Consuelo Vieira da Costa Foundation (CICET-FCVC).

ICTHM2025 aims to promote critical reflection and dialogue on the most pressing and contemporary issues within the fields of tourism and hospitality. This year's edition places particular emphasis on themes such as sustainability and regenerative tourism, digital transformation and artificial intelligence, and innovation in tourism management and experience design.

In line with current academic and professional dynamics, ICTHM2025 adopts a hybrid format, offering participants the flexibility to attend either in person or virtually. Contributions were welcomed in Portuguese, Spanish and English, with submissions accepted in two formats: full papers (short or full versions) and extended abstracts. All submissions were subject to a rigorous double-blind peer review process to ensure the scientific quality and relevance of the contributions. This *Book of Abstracts* compiles the abstracts of all accepted and registered submissions and is made available to conference participants.

The conference programme includes two distinguished plenary sessions: "Metaverse and Artificial Developments Towards Smart Tourism", delivered by Professor Dimitrios Buhalis, and "How to Become an Impactful Academic", presented by Professor Fevzi Okumus. Additionally, a special talk session entitled "Editors' Perspectives – A Conversation Between Authors and Editors" brought together Professors Buhalis, Okumus, and Ana Pinto Borges in a valuable exchange on academic publishing. The scientific programme is further enriched

by eleven thematic sessions, which include a diverse range of high-quality contributions from researchers and practitioners.

ICTHM2025 also offers authors the opportunity to submit their work for publication in reputable scientific journals in the areas of tourism, management, and marketing. The best full papers written in English, selected by the Scientific Committee, will be invited to undergo a further peer-review process for potential inclusion in indexed publications, subject to final approval by the respective editorial boards.

We hope this *Book of Abstracts* reflects the richness and diversity of research presented at ICTHM2025 and serves as a valuable reference for all participants.

Ethics & Malpractice Statement

The International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality Management (ICTHM2025) upholds the highest standards of scientific integrity, ethical research practices, and responsible publication. The Organizing Committee actively implements measures to prevent any form of academic or publication malpractice, ensuring the credibility and rigor of the workshop's proceedings.

As organizers of ICTHM2025, ISAG – European Business School and the Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC) assume full responsibility for overseeing all stages of the publication process for the Book of abstracts of the International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality Management. ISAG – European Business School, as the publisher of the book series, guarantees that editorial decisions remain independent and uninfluenced by commercial interests, including advertising, reprint, or other financial considerations.

All papers and abstracts submitted for presentation at ICTHM2025 and publication in the book of abstracts underwent a double-blind peer-review process, based on predefined rules and evaluation criteria approved by the Organizing Committee. This review process is conducted with objectivity and transparency, ensuring the confidentiality of all submissions. Manuscript acceptance is strictly governed by legal and ethical guidelines, with zero tolerance for plagiarism or copyright infringement.

For further details, the official Ethics & Malpractice Statement can be accessed at: https://iwthm25.isag.pt/en/ethics-malpractice/

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Communications

Session I – "Digital Innovation, Smart Tourism and Leadership in Transition"

Chair: Victor Tavares

ISAG – European Business School and Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC)

An Evaluation Model Proposal for Digital Booking Engines: A Service Design and User Experience (UX) Perspective in the tourism sector.

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Abstract

Purpose: This research presents a proposed evaluation model for digital booking engines, integrating principles of service design and user experience (UX), with a particular focus on the tourism sector and the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Methodology: Adopting a multidisciplinary and holistic approach, the study applies a qualitative hybrid methodology. The model is based on an adaptation of an already validated evaluation framework originally developed for video games by González Sánchez (2010). This adaptation incorporates the methodological recommendations of Stankov and Gretzel (2020) and Aciar and Aciar (2017), particularly the use of structured questionnaires for empirical evaluation. In addition, the model integrates principles of "Good Design" inspired by Real García (2020), as well as modifications to align it with sector-specific needs in tourism, including considerations of intelligence and ethics.

Results: The proposed evaluation model encompasses the following dimensions: Tourism, Usability, Navigability, Aesthetics, Intelligence, Ethics, and Sociability. The questionnaire retains the heuristic structure from González Sánchez's (2010) doctoral thesis, while adapting it to address the context of digital booking systems in tourism.

Notably, the Intelligence dimension assesses how AI has been embedded into platform functionalities, following the guidelines established by the EU High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence (corporate-body.CNECT: Directorate-General for Communication Networks, Content and Technology, 2021). The Ethical dimension draws on frameworks from *The Little Book of Design Research Ethics* (2021) and *Dark Patterns* (2021) ensuring alignment with Human-Centered Design (HCD) principles and promoting transparency and responsible design practices.

Originality: This research presents an innovative adaptation of a validated evaluation model from the video game domain to assess digital booking engines in tourism, integrating Human-Centered Design (HCD) principles. It uniquely incorporates dimensions such as Intelligence and Ethics, aligned with EU AI guidelines and design ethics frameworks. The study offers a novel, multidisciplinary approach tailored to the evolving needs of UX in AI-driven tourism platforms.

Keywords: *Tourism; Artificial Intelligence (AI); Service Design, User Experience (UX), Ethics*

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From Intermediaries to Enablers: Platformization and Business Model Innovation in Island Tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates how digital platformization in tourism—specifically through the case of "How to Porto Santo," a local tourism platform—affects inclusivity, value co-creation, and equitable access for local businesses and visitors. While platform business models are known to boost efficiency and consumer engagement, concerns persist around their impact on small-scale tourism actors, especially in peripheral or island destinations. The research aims to explore how a locally embedded platform can serve as a more inclusive alternative to dominant global platforms.

Methodology: The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory approach based on semi-structured interviews with two stakeholder groups: (1) local tourism businesses operating in Porto Santo, and (2) tourists who have used digital platforms during their visit. The interview guide was informed by recent literature on business model innovation, platform equity, and tourism co-creation. Thematic analysis is applied to uncover recurring patterns and stakeholder perceptions.

Results: Data collection is ongoing; the current submission presents preliminary findings and outlines the next steps in the research process.

Research Limitations: As a work in progress, this study is currently limited by a small sample size and ongoing data collection. Additionally, findings are specific to Porto Santo and may not be generalizable to other island or rural destinations. Future phases will expand the dataset, incorporate comparative platform analysis, and examine the policy landscape shaping platform access and participation.

Originality: This research contributes to the emerging literature on equitable digital transformation in tourism by highlighting how a local platform can act as a site of innovation and inclusion. It challenges the dominance of global intermediaries and foregrounds the voices of small-scale providers and visitors in platform design. By focusing on an island context, the study brings unique insights into the barriers and opportunities of platform business models in marginalized or geographically isolated tourism ecosystems.

Keywords: *Platform business models; Inclusive tourism; Digital transformation; Island destinations; Value co-creation; Tourism innovation*.

Perception of Tech-Savvy Millennial Tourists Regarding the Smart Tourism Destination Image (Smart-TDI) Framework

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Abstract

Purpose: This study proposes a second-order factor model to define the multi-dimensional constructs of the Smart Tourism Destination Image (Smart-TDI) in Bangkok, Thailand. The framework captures millennial tourists' perceptions of a smart city through six key dimensions: smart people, living, economy, governance, environment, and mobility.

Methodology: Using purposive sampling, 252 valid responses were collected via an online questionnaire distributed to 405 international tourists. Confirmatory factor analysis and second-order factor analysis validated the Smart-TDI framework.

Results: Findings confirm that the six sub-dimensions significantly shape tourists' perceptions, offering a robust model to guide smart tourism management in Thailand.

Research limitations: While insightful, the study is limited by its focus on millennial tourists, Bangkok-only data, and COVID-19-era responses.

Originality: This research uniquely integrates the European smart city framework with tourism image theory, creating a novel model applicable to smart tourism strategies in emerging economies.

Keywords: *Smart City, Smart Tourism, Destination Image, Millennial Tourist, Smart Tourism Destination Image*

Acknowledgements: This research project is funded by the International College, Khon Kaen University (KKUIC Research Fund 2024).

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Monitoring Platform Barra and Costa Nova Project: Agenda of Transformation of Tourism for Territorial Sustainability

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to develop a locally grounded monitoring system to better understand the effects of tourism in the Barra and Costa Nova region of Portugal. It forms part of the ATT3 – Tourism Transformation Agenda, an initiative supported by the Portuguese government by the PRR (Tourism Resilience and Recovery Programme). We adopted the theoretical perspectives of Society-Centered Tourism Development (Chim-Miki et al., 2024) and Wellbeing destination (Dwyer, 2022; Berbekova et al., 2021; Berbekova et al., 2022)

Methodology: It is a qualitative methodology study with four phases: i) A literature review extracted a set of indicators to monitor the effects of tourism and grouped them into economic, sociocultural and environmental effects; ii) we identified the baseline indicators and mandatory according to INSTO, the network of tourism observatories monitoring the economic, environmental and social impact of tourism at the destination level; iii) we conducted three Discussion Groups with tourism scholars to select the best indicators; and iv) we performed a Focus Group with experts in tourism and monitoring to validate the final system of monitoring.

Results: The results validated a system of indicators that covers the 11 mandatory areas of the INSTO network. However, it expands the proposal to consider the effects of tourism on the destination, business, and the community. The final model has 19 dimensions reflecting the sociocultural, socioenvironmental and socioeconomic effects.

Research limitations: The main limitations of the study were the predominantly national composition of the expert group and the need to limit the number of indicators in order to ensure the monitoring system was feasible to implement.

Originality: The originality of this work lies in creating a tourism effects monitoring system grounded in a society-centred approach to tourism development. It is guided by ESG principles to create social value from tourism and, also provides a platform designed to serve diverse users, including businesses, destinations, governments, and residents.

Keywords: *Tourism Monitoring; Impacts; Society-centric tourism development; Social value.*

Acknowledgements: The study was funded by the PRR – Plano de Recuperção e Resiliência and by the NextGenerationEU funds at Universidade de Aveiro, through the scope of the Agenda Business Innovation "ATT Agenda Mobilizadora Acelerar e Transformar o Turismo" (Project no. 47 with the application C645192610-00000060).

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Session II – "Smart Tourism, Identity, and Visitor Profiles"

Chair: Rui Rosa Dias

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Pilgrims of Fátima: understanding the demand side

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper aims to understand the demand side of pilgrimages to the Shrine of Fátima (Portugal). By achieving this objective, we seek to address the gap in the literature regarding the lack of studies on the determinants of Catholic religious tourism.

Methodology: A database comprising over four hundred respondents was constructed. The data were processed in Excel and further analysed using the statistical software Stata 18.

Results: Among the respondents, 65.2% were female and 34.8% male, with no respondents selecting another sex/gender. With respect to religion, the majority identified as Catholic (over 93%). In addition, some visitors identified as atheists, agnostics, or as belonging to other religions, excluding Muslim or Protestant denominations. 96% of participants reported feeling satisfied when visiting the Shrine, and 84% indicated their intention to recommend the destination to family and friends. The average expenditure per respondent in the sanctuary-city was approximately: €28 on accommodation; €28 on food; €20 on shopping; €38 on transport; and €8 on museums and other attractions.

Regarding the decision to visit the Shrine of Fátima, around 22% of respondents stated that having a credit card was important or very important. 18% considered it important or very important to be able to purchase tickets and accommodation and pay in instalments. 52% reported that having savings for travel was important or very important. Regarding the country's economic situation, about 30% were indifferent, while another

28% considered it important or very important. The effects of inflation were deemed important or very important by around 28%, while 32% were indifferent and 40% considered them of little or no importance.

Originality: This paper gathers responses from more than 400 individuals who visited the Shrine of Fátima. It sheds light on issues that go beyond the perceived importance and satisfaction attributed to a tourist destination, allowing for a deeper understanding of the demand side. The study reveals the behaviour of pilgrims and visitors to the Catholic shrine and how they assess the influence of economic determinants on their decision to undertake a pilgrimage or visit.

Keywords: *Pilgrims; Shrine of Fátima; Portugal; Demand Side*

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Profile of the Surf Tourist in Peniche in the Low Season

Perfil do Turista de Surf em Peniche na Época Baixa

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Abstract

In recent years, tourism has boosted local economic development, being strategic for the sustainability and dynamism of communities. This quantitative study analyzes the profile of surf tourists in Peniche in the low season, based on 202 questionnaires applied in five places frequented by surfers. The results show that most tourists are in the age groups of 25 to 30 years and 31 to 40 years, evidencing a young adult audience financially autonomous and prone to travel to surf. Most are male, have higher education and consider themselves to have a level of expertise in initial or intermediate surfing. As for nationality, tourists from Portugal stand out, followed by Germany, Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom and other mostly European countries, which reveals international diversity. The data obtained come from the preliminary phase of a study that also aims to understand the perception of tourists about the city's cultural offer.

Objective: The aim of this research is to analyze the profile of surf tourism in Peniche in the low season, including gender, age, education and self-assessment of surfing expertise. Considering that surf tourism has been consolidating itself as a strategic vector for sustainable local development, especially in coastal destinations such as Peniche (Pereira, 2022; Cárdenas-García et al., 2024), the growing popularity of this sport reinforces the importance of understanding the motivations and behaviors of its practitioners, especially outside the high season.

Methodology: The methodology adopted in this study is quantitative in nature, with an exploratory-descriptive character, which is recommended in studies of tourist profiles in specific contexts (Bartlett et al., 2001; Batra, 2006). Convenience sampling is a common practice in investigations that aim to generate preliminary knowledge in little-explored contexts (Pedro et al., 2021).

Results: Considering a sample of 202 tourists surveyed in Peniche, the results indicate that 72.7% of the participants are concentrated in the age groups of 25 to 30 years (35.6%) and 31 to 40 years (37.1%). This data suggests that surf tourism in Peniche predominantly attracts young adults, an audience with greater financial autonomy and more likely to travel to practice this sport. It is also observed that most of the respondents are male (75.2%).

Regarding the level of education of surf tourists, there is a prevalence of individuals with higher education. Most respondents (58.4%) have a bachelor's degree or equivalent degree, while 22.8% have a master's degree or advanced training. Only 18.8% have secondary education or lower education.

As for nationality, Portugal represents 30.7% of tourists, followed by Germany (22.8%), Greece and Italy (9.4%), and the United Kingdom (6.9%). Other countries are also represented on a smaller scale, adding up to 20.2%, evidencing the international diversity of the public that visits Peniche in the low season.

Regarding the level of surfing expertise, they consider to have, the overwhelming majority of respondents attribute an intermediate (49.5%) or initial (49%) level to this dimension, with only 1.5% of respondents considering themselves to have an advanced level performance.

These data reinforce the perception of Peniche as a consolidated destination for surf tourism, whose territorial and cultural characteristics had already been highlighted by Reis and Jorge (2015), when they underlined Peniche's transition from a fishing village to a "surf territory", with surfing assuming itself as a vector of local identity. Since there is a gap in research and no specific studies on the low season are found, the present research complements this panorama by revealing that, even outside the high season, Peniche continues to attract international surfers, demonstrating the potential of the destination for the reduction of tourist seasonality.

Limitations: This research on surf tourism in Peniche has some limitations. First, conducting the survey in a single city, Peniche, does not allow the generalization of the results. Additionally, while Peniche is a significant destination for surfing, its unique characteristics may not reflect the dynamics of other surf venues, limiting the applicability of the results to a broader scale. Future research could include a longitudinal approach, allowing comparing data from different eras and identifying trends over time, which would enrich the understanding of surf tourism.

Originality: The originality of this consists in analyzing the profile of the surf tourist in this particular season, in a region that depends a lot on tourism in the high season, thus bringing a contribution to a better understanding of this phenomenon.

Keywords: *Surf Tourism; Seasonality; Low season.*

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Resumo

Nos últimos anos, o turismo tem impulsionado o desenvolvimento económico local, sendo estratégico para a sustentabilidade e dinamização de comunidades. Este estudo, de matriz quantitativa, analisa o perfil dos turistas de surf em Peniche na época baixa, com base em 202 questionários aplicados em cinco locais frequentados por surfistas. Os resultados mostram que a maioria dos turistas se encontra nas faixas etárias de 25 a 30 anos e 31 a 40 anos, evidenciando um público jovem adulto, financeiramente autónomo e propenso a viajar para a prática do surf. A maioria é do género masculino, possui formação superior e considera ter um nível de perícia no surf inicial ou intermédio. Quanto à nacionalidade, destacam-se turistas de Portugal, seguido de Alemanha, Grécia, Itália e Reino Unido e outros países maioritariamente europeus, o que revela diversidade internacional. Os dados obtidos provêm da fase preliminar de um estudo que visa, ainda, compreender a perceção dos turistas sobre a oferta cultural da cidade.

Objetivo: O objetivo desta investigação é analisar o perfil do turismo de surf em Peniche na época baixa, incluindo género, idade, educação e autoavaliação de perícia no surf. Considerando que o turismo de surf tem vindo a consolidar-se como um vetor estratégico para o desenvolvimento local sustentável, especialmente em destinos costeiros como Peniche (Pereira, 2022; Cárdenas-García et al., 2024), a crescente popularidade desta modalidade reforça a importância de compreender as motivações e comportamentos dos seus praticantes, especialmente fora da época alta.

Metodologia: A metodologia adotada neste estudo é de natureza quantitativa, com um caráter exploratório-descritivo, o que é recomendado em estudos de perfis de turistas em contextos específicos (Bartlett et al., 2001; Batra, 2006). A amostragem por conveniência é uma prática comum em investigações que visam gerar conhecimento preliminar em contextos pouco explorados (Pedro et al., 2021).

Resultados: Considerando uma amostra de 202 turistas inquiridos em Peniche, os resultados indicam que 72,7% dos participantes estão concentrados nas faixas etárias de 25 a 30 anos (35,6%) e 31 a 40 anos (37,1%). Este dado sugere que o turismo de surf em Peniche atrai predominantemente adultos jovens, um público com maior autonomia financeira e mais propenso a viajar para a prática deste desporto. Observa-se também que grande parte dos respondentes é do género masculino (75,2%).

No que se refere ao nível de escolaridade dos turistas de surf, percebe-se uma prevalência de indivíduos com formação superior. A maioria dos inquiridos (58,4%) possui licenciatura ou grau equivalente, enquanto 22,8% possui mestrado ou formação avançada. Apenas 18,8% possuem ensino secundário ou nível inferior.

Quanto à nacionalidade, Portugal representa 30,7% dos turistas, seguido da Alemanha (22,8%), Grécia e Itália (9,4%), e Reino Unido (6,9%). Outros países também estão representados em menor escala, somando 20,2%, evidenciando a diversidade internacional do público que visita Peniche na época baixa.

Em relação ao nível de perícia no surf que consideram ter, a esmagadora maioria dos respondentes atribui um nível intermédio (49,5%) ou inicial (49%) a esta dimensão, sendo que apenas 1,5% dos respondentes considera ter um desempenho de nível avançado.

Estes dados reforçam a perceção de Peniche como um destino consolidado para o turismo de surf, cujas características territoriais e culturais já haviam sido destacadas por Reis e Jorge (2015), ao sublinharem a transição de Peniche de uma vila piscatória

para “território de surf”, com o surf assumindo-se como vetor de identidade local. Uma vez que há uma lacuna na investigação e não se encontram estudos específicos sobre a época baixa, a presente investigação complementa esse panorama ao revelar que, mesmo fora da época alta, Peniche continua a atrair surfistas internacionais, demonstrando o potencial do destino para a redução da sazonalidade turística.

Limitações: Esta investigação sobre o turismo de surf em Peniche apresenta algumas limitações. Primeiramente, a condução do inquérito em uma única cidade, Peniche, não permite a generalização dos resultados. Além disso, embora Peniche seja um destino significativo para o surf, as suas características únicas podem não refletir as dinâmicas de outros locais de surf, limitando a aplicabilidade dos resultados a uma escala mais ampla. Futuras investigações poderão incluir uma abordagem longitudinal, permitindo comparar os dados de diferentes épocas e identificar tendências ao longo do tempo, o que enriqueceria a compreensão do turismo de surf.

Originalidade: A originalidade deste consiste em analisar o perfil do turista de surf nesta época em particular, numa região que depende muito do turismo na época alta, trazendo, assim, um contributo no sentido de se melhor compreender este fenómeno.

Palavras-Chave: *Turismo de Surf; Sazonalidade; Época baixa.*

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Reimagining Garden Visits: Managers' Perspectives on Smart Technologies

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Abstract

Purpose: Found in various civilizations and societies, gardens have become significant cultural, artistic, and historical documents, as they contribute to the preservation and reinforcement of collective memory (Andrade, 2008). Valued by their very nature, gardens are increasingly popular as visitor destinations (Benfield, 2013, Silva, 2020; Benfield, 2021), to the extent that garden tourism is now regarded as "one of the most dynamic and growing areas of tourism" and "may be the most important and largest sector of contemporary outdoor leisure" (Benfield, 2021: viii, 2). This growing popularity is fuelled by the development of new gardens and attractions, innovative strategies, programs, and initiatives, as well as evolving leisure demands and market opportunities (Benfield, 2021). In this context, gardens are positioned as strategic resources and prominent tourist attractions, in response to increased demand for cultural, outdoor, and technology-enhanced experiences. Since the nature of gardens, emphasises in-person interaction, their physical experience is considered irreplaceable – as noted in the Florence Charter: "any historic garden is designed to be seen and walked about in" (ICOMOS, 1982:3). However, their intrinsic value is not always effectively communicated, which often result in low engagement and satisfaction among visitors (Sood & Bhandari, 2023). This is partly due to the lack of adequate communication and interpretation tools. In response, some gardens have started to adopt smart technologies (Andrade & Dias, 2020; Sood & Bhandari, 2023; Silva & Carvalho, 2024) as a means of differentiating and enriching the visitor experience. These technologies have emerged as powerful tools to communicate and interpret the historical and cultural significance of gardens (Silva & Carvalho, 2023; Sood & Bhandari, 2023). Smart technologies allow visitors to prepare for their visits in advance, enhance the on-site experience, and reflect or relive their visit afterwards (Buonincontri & Marasco, 2017). This transformation has been facilitated by the widespread adoption of mobile devices and Wi-Fi (Buonincontri & Marasco, 2017; Andrade & Dias, 2020; Sood & Bhandari, 2023), and further accelerated by the pandemic, which significantly altered cultural and tourism consumption patterns. These innovations are reshaping the way visitors access information, learn about physical spaces, and engage in more personalised and participatory ways (Andrade & Dias, 2020). In this context, it becomes relevant to explore the implementation of smart technologies in Portuguese gardens from the perspective of managers, thereby assessing their perceived impact on the visitor experience.

Methodology: To achieve this, structured interviews were conducted with managers or other individuals responsible for gardens where smart technologies are in use, based on prior information collected from websites and field visits. The data were analysed through content analysis across four main areas: i) implementation of smart technologies

(motivations and visitor feedback); ii) benefits and perceived value; iii) obstacles and challenges; and iv) future perspectives.

Results: Managers cited several motivations for adopting technologies, including: enabling autonomous visits with orientation support; enhancing visits with supplementary information; improving accessibility for those unable to visit physically (a particularly relevant concern during the pandemic and for audiences with special needs); encouraging pre-visit planning to support exploration and interactivity; and encouraging visitors to spread out in the open spaces/gardens. Gardens that collected data on the use of these technologies reported generally positive visitor feedback. Surveys and informal feedback are used to evaluate and adapt these tools continuously to better meet visitors' expectations.

Smart technologies have shown to significantly enhance the garden visit experience. They promote autonomy and personalized exploration during the visit, facilitate spatial orientation, and enrich interpretation with multilayered content that deepen knowledge about the elements within the garden. For school groups, smart tools support preparation through virtual previews. Remote access also allows virtual exploration for those unable to visit in person – often sparking interest in a future physical visit. These tools are frequently updated based on visitor input, which helps to maintain their relevance. They also support the discovery of lesser-known areas and foster a deeper understanding of the garden's value.

Despite these benefits in enhancing the visitor experience, several challenges persist. These include technical and IT issues, in terms of both system operation and maintenance, difficulties in selecting appropriate content and matching technology to context, and the challenge of coherently integrating digital resources with physical signage. Infrastructure installation is often limited by budget, logistics, or environmental constraints – particularly in protected heritage areas. Equipment durability is also threatened by weather and vandalism, thus posing risks to sustainability and future investment.

The future use of smart technologies in gardens is expected to focus on continuous updates, the diversification of tools, media integration, and stronger collaboration between technical and maintenance teams. Expansion of QR code access and the gradual replacement of older equipment with more durable, up-to-date versions are planned. Furthermore, improvements in physical signage will support seamless integration with digital content. Close cooperation between technical and operational teams will be crucial to ensuring the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of these initiatives.

Research limitations: This study is limited to the perspective of garden managers. However, it does provide a foundation for future research, particularly studies centred on visitor experiences and perceptions of smart technologies.

Originality: This research presents a novel perspective by focusing on the digital transformation of gardens – spaces that are both cultural and natural – through the lens of smart technologies. The Portuguese context remains underexplored in this area. By analysing managers' perceptions, the study identifies both benefits and challenges, and thus offers insights that can inform future research and practice, especially when aimed at enhancing visitor-centred approaches.

Keywords: *Garden experience; Heritage interpretation; Smart technologies; Managers' perspectives.*

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Tourism as Pilgrimage: Self-Discovery and Sacred Space in Boulaur

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper explores spiritual tourism as a contemporary form of pilgrimage through an autoethnographic case study at the Cistercian Community of Boulaur in southwestern France. Known for its vibrant young community of nuns and its integration of prayer, agricultural work, and hospitality, Boulaur presents a distinctive model of monastic engagement with modern society. The study investigates the "étonnée experience"—a term coined by the sisters to describe the transformative journeys of young volunteers who immerse themselves in the daily rhythm of ora et labora (prayer and work) during short stays.

Methodology: Grounded in immersive fieldwork and reflective autoethnography, this research examines how Boulaur functions as a living sacred space that fosters processes of self-discovery, silence, and reconnection, particularly for young adults facing personal or vocational crossroads. The analysis situates Boulaur within broader discussions on spiritual tourism, pilgrimage, and experiential religiosity, emphasizing the monastery's role as a dynamic spiritual ecosystem. Special attention is given to the agricultural dimension—where volunteers contribute to the community's organic farm—which emerges as both a practical and symbolic site of personal transformation.

Results: The findings suggest that spiritual tourism in Boulaur transcends consumerist models of wellness and escapism. Instead, it offers a relational and transformative experience characterized by inner questioning, re-enchantment, and authentic encounter—key elements of pilgrimage in the contemporary world. This study highlights how religious communities can offer alternative spaces of hospitality, meaning, and rootedness within an increasingly fragmented cultural landscape.

Research limitations: Two major limitations are acknowledged: (1) the small sample size, based on an in-depth interview with a single participant; and (2) potential bias inherent in the autoethnographic methodology.

Originality: To the best of our knowledge, this is the first academic study conducted by a marketing scholar in a European Cistercian monastery in the twenty-first century, using an autoethnographic approach to explore spiritual tourism and religious community engagement.

Keywords: *Spiritual Tourism; Pilgrimage; Experiential Religiosity; Monastic Hospitality; Autoethnography; Cistercian Tradition.*

"Fairness" factor in agrifood systems as key strategy to reduce food waste by 2027

"Justiça" nos sistemas agroalimentares como estratégia base para reduzir o desperdício alimentar até 2027

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Abstract

Purpose: To perceive the fairness factor within Portuguese agrifood supply chain management (SCM) - specifically in relation to the food waste problem, operational processes, and governance policies and it impact on environment, social and economy balance.

Methodology: The Delphi technique was employed to formulate projections concerning the agri-food sector in Portugal over a ten-year frame. Due to the intricate nature of the research topic, this approach was deemed suitable and effective, as it facilitates the design of future policies through iterative rounds of questionnaires. These surveys gathered and analysed expert insights, evaluations, and feedback. In this study, a series of statements were crafted to anticipate potential developments within Portugal's agri-food industry related to the food waste.

Results: There was studied several sentences concerning the research goal, mainly two complementary variables: i) *by 2027, all Portuguese public and private schools will be supplied mainly by local producers (from the region where the school is located) and certified in sustainable production methods* and ii) *by 2027, food waste in Portugal will be reduced to 15% of national production*. Currently, 17% of national production is rejected or wasted. Regarding the first sentence commented by the Delphi panel, the results showed that it will be possible to supply private and public schools, mainly with local producers by 2027. The statistical indicators obtained were: 4.2 average mean (1-5 Likert scale), standard deviation= 0.6 and coefficient variation= 16.6%.

The data collected based on the coefficient of variation (CV) allows to assume that it will be possible to reduce the food waste in Portugal from 17% to 15% until 2027. The Delphi panel marked 4.4 (1-5 Likert scale) as mean indicator on this sentence with a low variability - standard deviation, around 0.5. This allows to assume an CV of about 11.3%, underlining the possibility of achieving the 15% food waste goal.

Research limitations: It would be valuable to compare these results with those from other agri-food contexts, especially in countries with similar agri-food structures. Furthermore, gaining insights from food retail managers on how to effectively implement food waste reduction strategies and comparing them with the public perspective of decision-makers would add further breadth to the study.

Originality: Understanding how to act in the long term on a serious problem in agri-food value chains in Portugal, particularly with regard to food waste, was the main reason for the research and gave it its originality. From the perspective of the experts consulted, it was found that there will be support for the implementation of public policies to reduce food waste by 2027.

Keywords: *Agrifood Systems, Delphi Method, Fairness, Food Waste, Supply Chain Management.*

Resumo

Objetivo: Perceber o fator "*justiça*" na gestão da cadeia de abastecimento agroalimentar (SCM) portuguesa - especificamente em relação ao problema do desperdício alimentar, processos operacionais e políticas de governação e o seu impacto no equilíbrio ambiental, social e económico.

Metodologia: A técnica Delphi foi utilizada para formular projeções relativas ao sector agroalimentar em Portugal ao longo de um período de dez anos. Devido à complexidade do tema de investigação, esta abordagem metodológica foi considerada adequada e eficaz, uma vez que ajuda na formulação de políticas futuras, através de rondas iterativas de questionários. Analisaram-se opiniões, fizeram-se avaliações e obteve-se o *feedback* de especialistas. Neste estudo foram elaboradas uma série de afirmações, com vista a antecipar potenciais desenvolvimentos na indústria agroalimentar portuguesa.

Resultados: Foram estudadas possíveis metas, referentes ao objetivo da investigação, principalmente duas variáveis complementares: i) *até 2027, todas as escolas públicas e privadas portuguesas serão abastecidas maioritariamente por produtores locais (da região onde se situa a escola) e certificadas em métodos de produção sustentáveis*; e ii) *até 2027, o desperdício alimentar em Portugal será reduzido para 15% da produção nacional*. Atualmente, 17% da produção nacional é rejeitada ou desperdiçada. Em relação à primeira frase, os resultados mostraram que será possível abastecer as escolas públicas e privadas, principalmente com base em produtores locais, até 2027. Os indicadores estatísticos obtidos foram: média de 4.2 (escala Likert de 1 a 5), desvio padrão = 0.6 e coeficiente de variação = 16.6%. Os dados recolhidos com base no coeficiente de variação (CV) permitem assumir que será possível reduzir o desperdício alimentar em Portugal de 17% para 15%, até 2027. O painel Delphi marcou 4.4 (escala Likert de 1 a 5) como indicador médio nesta frase, com uma baixa variabilidade - desvio padrão, na ordem dos 0.5. Isto permite assumir um CV de cerca de 11.3%, sublinhando a possibilidade de atingir a meta dos 15% de desperdício alimentar.

Limitações: Seria valioso comparar estes resultados com os de outros contextos agroalimentares, especialmente em países com estruturas agroalimentares semelhantes. Além disso, obter *insights* dos gestores do retalho alimentar sobre como implementar estratégias de redução do desperdício alimentar de forma eficaz e compará-los com a perspetiva pública dos decisores, daria mais amplitude ao estudo.

Originalidade: Perceber como atuar no longo prazo, sobre um grave problema nas cadeias de valor agroalimentares em Portugal, nomeadamente no que ao desperdício alimentar respeita, constituiu o grande motivo da investigação e conferiu a sua originalidade. Do ponto de vista dos *experts* consultados, verificou-se que haverá suporte à implementação de políticas públicas, para reduzir o desperdício alimentar até 2027.

Palavras-Chave: *Cadeia de Suprimentos, Desperdício Alimentar, Justiça, Método Delphi, Sistemas agroalimentares.*

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Session III – "Human Development, Emotions and the Sustainability Challenge in Tourism"

Chair: Marco Bagheri

ISAG – European Business School and Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC)

Pop Culture, Engagement and Visitor Profiles: The Case of Comic Con – Porto 2024

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Abstract

This study investigates audience heterogeneity and loyalty formation at Comic Con Portugal 2024. Drawing on 1,686 on-site questionnaires, we identified three audience segments through K-Means clustering: Hardcore Fans (71.5%), Enthusiasts (23.5%) and Casual Visitors (5.1%), that differ significantly in socio-demographics, ticket choice and prior attendance. An ordered logistic regression shows that positive emotions, perceived social and personal enrichment, exceeded expectations and advocacy intentions markedly increase the probability of return, whereas feelings of marginalisation reduce it. Segment membership plays a secondary but significant role. By integrating segmentation and loyalty modelling, this paper provides quantitative evidence that emotional and social value co-create loyalty in large-scale pop-culture events. The findings extend research on fandom participation and cultural tourism while offering actionable insights for event managers working to sustain visitor loyalty in inclusive, experiential settings.

Purpose: This study investigates how audience segmentation and emotional and social factors influence loyalty formation at Comic Con Portugal 2024.

Methodology: Data were collected from 1,686 on-site questionnaires. Audience segments were identified using K-Means clustering. An ordered logistic regression was applied to examine the predictors of visitor loyalty.

Results: We identified three audience segments: Hardcore Fans (71.5%), Enthusiasts (23.5%) and Casual Visitors (5.1%), differing in socio-demographics, ticket choice, and prior attendance. Positive emotions, perceived social and personal enrichment, exceeded expectations, and advocacy intentions significantly increase return probability, while feelings of marginalisation reduce it. Segment membership also plays a significant, albeit secondary, role.

Research limitations: The use of a non-probability convenience sample may limit the generalisability of findings. The cross-sectional nature of the data also precludes longitudinal analysis of loyalty formation over time.

Originality: By integrating segmentation and loyalty modelling, this paper provides quantitative evidence that emotional and social value co-create loyalty in large-scale pop-culture events and offers a data-driven classification of attendees. It extends research on fandom participation and cultural tourism, offering actionable insights for event managers to sustain visitor loyalty in inclusive, experiential settings. This robust statistical classification of attendee profiles, moving beyond anecdotal observations, provides practical implications for cultural tourism and event strategy.

Keywords: *Comic Con; Audience segmentation; Visitor loyalty; Pop-culture events; Experience economy; Cultural tourism*

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Cultural Dimensions and Intentions towards Sustainability in Air Transportation

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper investigates the influence of cultural dimensions, the long-term orientation (LTO) and collectivism (COL) on environmentally responsible behaviour in leisure air travel, applying the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to examine attitudes, intentions, and actual behaviours.

Methodology: The authors used a structured questionnaire to respondents in the Czech Republic and Spain, combining validated TPB constructs with items reflecting cultural dimensions. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the hypothesised relationships and assess the predictive power of cultural and psychological variables on behavioural outcomes.

Results: The findings indicate that collectivism indirectly affects behavioural intentions through subjective norms, which were the strongest predictors of intention. Contrary to expectations, long-term orientation had no significant direct or indirect effect. Perceived behavioural control was not a relevant factor in this context. Generally, respondents demonstrated low intention and limited behavioural change regarding air travel for environmental reasons.

Originality: While sustainable consumer behaviour has been widely explored, empirical research addressing environmentally responsible actions in leisure air travel remains limited, especially from a cross-cultural perspective. This paper extends the TPB framework by incorporating cultural values and measuring behavioural intentions and self-reported behaviours.

Practical implications: Results suggest that individual-level appeals may be insufficient to drive behavioural change in leisure air travel. Instead, shifting societal norms through policy, media, and community-based initiatives may be more effective. Airlines and tourism stakeholders should focus on strategies that appeal to group identity and shared responsibility, such as promoting carbon offset options and sustainability commitments.

Limitations: The study scope is limited to two European countries, with a non-random sample and unvalidated behavioural measures, restricting generalisability.

Keywords*: Environmental behaviour; Air transportation; Theory of planned behaviour; Collectivism; Long-term Orientation; Cultural values*.

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Rethinking the VBN Model with Self-Conscious Emotions: A Shame-Based Approach to Explaining the Attitude–Behavior Gap in Sustainable Tourism

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to conceptually reframe the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) model by integrating self-conscious emotions (SCE), particularly shame, as a dual-path moderator. While the original VBN framework effectively links values, beliefs, and norms to pro-environmental behavior, it overlooks the complex role of emotional ambivalence, particularly the impact of shame. By examining how shame may either activate or suppress personal norms, this paper contributes a theoretically grounded model that helps explain the persistent gap between environmental attitudes and actual behavior. The model is based on a literature-driven conceptual synthesis and is illustrated through the real-world example of flight shame (flygskam).

Methodology: This paper takes a model-based conceptual framework-building approach. It synthesizes insights from the VBN model, the theory of SCE, and the literature addressing attitude–behavior inconsistency. A focused review of empirical and theoretical studies was conducted to ensure theoretical saturation. Through theoretical integration, the paper proposes a revised VBN framework in which shame functions as an emotional moderator that can either strengthen or suppress the activation of personal norms. The dual-role structure of this framework is explored in particular through the case of flight shame, which is a self-conscious emotional response to unsustainable travel behavior. This illustrates how shame can lead to both engagement and avoidance.

Results: The study proposes an extended VBN model in which shame acts as an emotional trigger that influences personal norms in two distinct ways. Constructive shame encourages moral reflection and promotes pro-environmental behavior, whereas paralyzing shame leads to discomfort, rationalization, or avoidance. The model emphasizes that individual differences determine the direction of this effect. The concept of 'flight shame' is used to illustrate how the same emotional stimulus can lead to either sustainable action or behavioral disengagement.

Originality: This paper makes a novel contribution to sustainability research by theoretically integrating SCE into a widely used cognitive-normative model. While existing frameworks often assume that emotions are uniformly motivational, this study introduces a dual-pathway structure in which the activation of norms by shame depends on its intensity and the situational framing. Applying this model to real-world phenomena such as flight shame provides a nuanced way of understanding emotional ambivalence in sustainability contexts.

Keywords: *Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Model; Self-Conscious Emotions (SCE); Flight Shame (Flygskam).*

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The role of guides in sports museums and archaeological sites: Evidence from Greece

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Abstract

Interpreting sport in museums and archaeological sites involves presenting sport not only as entertainment or nostalgia, but as a vital perspective for understanding wider social, cultural and historical dynamics. Sport is deeply intertwined with society, reflecting issues of identity, community, politics and even conflict. Museums and archaeological sites increasingly recognize the power of sport interpretation to engage visitors, provoke dialogue and promote inclusion. Guides in Greece, especially in sports museums and archaeological sites, play a multifaceted and critical role. Their responsibilities extend far beyond the mere relying of events, i.e. they are educators, cultural mediators, protectors of cultural heritage and key influencers in shaping the visitor's experience and promoting responsible tourism.

Purpose: The aim of this paper is to highlight the role of tour guides in sports museums and sports venues.

Methodology: The case study is the archaeological site of Olympia and the Museum of the History of the Olympic Games of Antiquity, and the methodology applied involves interviews with licensed tour guides who are professionally active in the aforementioned sites.

Results: The results showed that the presence of an experienced guide turns a passive visit into an interactive learning experience, deepening the appreciation of Greece's sporting and archaeological heritage.

Originality: As the corresponding author I certify that this manuscript is original and its publication does not infringe any copyright.

Keywords: *Sport Museums; Archaeological Sites; Guides; Greece.*

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Values at the Core: An Innovative Educational Model Integrating Personal Development, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship for Enhanced Skills Development and Employee Retention

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper introduces Bagheri's Educational Model, an innovative pedagogical framework that addresses critical gaps in contemporary professional development by positioning "Values" as the central organizing principle connecting three fundamental domains: Personal Development, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship. The model responds to the growing recognition that traditional educational approaches often treat these disciplines as separate entities, creating skill gaps that contribute to employee disengagement and turnover challenges across industries, particularly relevant to the tourism and hospitality sectors where authentic service delivery and innovative problem-solving are essential.

Methodology: The model employs a triangular theoretical framework with Personal Development, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship as the three vertices, unified by "Values" at the center. This configuration creates three integrated learning pathways: (1) Authentic Brand (Personal Development + Marketing), focusing on aligning personal values with professional brand identity; (2) Dynamic Resilience (Personal Development + Entrepreneurship), cultivating entrepreneurial mindsets rooted in self-awareness and adaptive capacity; and (3) Strategic Growth (Marketing + Entrepreneurship), integrating marketing competencies with entrepreneurial thinking for sustainable development. The theoretical framework draws from established pedagogical principles including experiential learning, values-based education, and competency-based skill development (Asante & Affum-Osei, 2019). The model's pedagogical implementation incorporates values integration workshops, interpersonal skills seminars, authentic communication laboratories, resilience building simulations, strategic innovation projects, and cross-functional collaboration exercises.

Keywords: *Personal development; Marketing; Entrepreneurship; Values; Learning; Integrated competencies.*

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Chair: António Lopes de Almeida

ISAG – European Business School and Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC)

The Role of Augmented Reality in Brand Love and Brand Loyalty in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores the impact of Augmented Reality (AR) on the development of Brand Love and Brand Loyalty within the hospitality sector. The research aims to understand how factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, satisfaction, and perceived risk influence consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions in relation to hotel brands adopting AR technologies.

Methodology: A quantitative research design was employed through an online questionnaire targeting 115 participants. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Mann-Whitney U tests, linear and multiple regression analyses, and a K-means cluster analysis. These methods allowed for a detailed examination of user profiles and the relationships between variables related to AR adoption and customer loyalty.

Results: Findings revealed that perceived usefulness and satisfaction with AR significantly influence both Brand Love and Brand Loyalty. Ease of use was a key factor enhancing users' willingness to return to the hotel, while perceived risk had a limited impact. Cluster analysis identified four user profiles, highlighting differing attitudes and emotional engagement toward AR applications.

Research limitations: The study is limited by its sample size and demographic concentration, which may restrict generalizability. Additionally, while perceived risk was included, deeper insights into privacy concerns and their evolution over time were not extensively explored and warrant further research.

Originality: This research contributes to the growing body of literature by offering a comprehensive empirical analysis of AR's role in the hospitality experience. It uniquely combines brand attachment theory with emerging technology adoption, providing practical recommendations for hotel managers aiming to implement AR as a tool for differentiation and customer engagement.

Keywords:*Augmented Reality; Brand Love; Brand Loyalty; Hospitality; Customer Satisfaction; Consumer Behavior.*

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Digital Accessibility and Emerging Technologies in Cross-border Tourism: A Bibliometric Review for the Euroregion of Northern Portugal and Galicia

Acessibilidade digital e tecnologias emergentes no turismo transfronteiriço: Uma Revisão Bibliométrica na Euro-região Norte de Portugal e Galiza

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this article is to present a methodological proposal for carrying out a bibliometric review of the scientific literature related to digital accessibility and emerging technologies applied to cross-border regions, with a focus on the Euro-region of Northern Portugal and Galicia. The aim is to identify and evaluate patterns, trends and the impact of scientific production, thus contributing to a conceptual understanding of the integration of emerging technologies and digital accessibility in cross-border tourism contexts.

Methodology: A quantitative methodology based on a systematic bibliometric analysis will be adopted. To this end, the *Bibliometrix R* package will be used, using the *Biblioshiny* application, enabling the extraction, processing and detailed visualisation of bibliometric information from bibliographic data obtained from recognised scientific databases such as *Scopus*, *Web of Science* (*WoS*) and *PubMed*. The following search equation will be used: ‘’digital accessibility‘ OR ’accessible tourism‘ OR ’e-tourism‘ AND ’emerging technology*‘ AND ’cross-border tourism‘ OR ’transboundary tourism‘’. The search will be limited to open-access scientific articles published over a five-year period (2020-2025).

Results: This quantitative methodology aims to answer the following guiding questions: what are the main trends and publication patterns in the area of digital accessibility and emerging technologies applied to cross-border tourism; which institutions, authors and regions stand out most in this line of research; what research gaps can be identified and what implications do they have for the Euro-region of Northern Portugal and Galicia? It is hoped that the results obtained will make it possible to construct a critical synthesis of the current literature, clearly identifying the main theoretical and methodological contributions, as well as emerging opportunities for future research.

Research limitations: The limitations of this study stem essentially from its exploratory nature and the bibliometric methodology chosen. By focusing exclusively on scientific articles indexed in specific databases (*Scopus*, *WoS* and *PubMed*) and restricting itself to open-access publications over a defined period of five years, it may not cover all of the existing scientific literature, excluding any relevant contributions from grey literature or studies prior to the period considered. Furthermore, given the conceptual and exploratory nature of the study, no empirical or conclusive results will yet be presented on the practical impact of these technologies and digital accessibility in the Euro-region of Northern Portugal and Galicia.

Originality: This work is a pioneering effort in proposing a systematic bibliometric review that explicitly articulates digital accessibility and emerging technologies in the specific context of cross-border tourism, focusing on the Euro-region of Northern Portugal and Galicia. Based on the results obtained, this conceptual approach could serve as a solid foundation for future empirical research, as well as helping to formulate public policies and business and government strategies aimed at promoting more inclusive, accessible and technologically advanced tourism in this European cross-border region.

Keywords: *Digital accessibility; bibliometric analysis; e-tourism; cross-border regions; emerging technologies; accessible tourism.*

Resumo

Objetivo: Este artigo tem como objetivo apresentar uma proposta metodológica para a realização de uma revisão bibliométrica da literatura científica relacionada com a acessibilidade digital e as tecnologias emergentes aplicadas às regiões transfronteiriças, com foco na Euro-região Norte de Portugal e Galiza. Pretende-se identificar e avaliar padrões, tendências e o impacto na produção científica, contribuindo, deste modo, para a compreensão conceptual da integração das tecnologias emergentes e da acessibilidade digital em contextos turísticos transfronteiriços.

Metodologia: Será adotada uma metodologia quantitativa baseada numa análise bibliométrica sistemática. Para tal, será utilizado o pacote *Bibliometrix R*, com recurso ao aplicativo *Biblioshiny*, permitindo a extração, o processamento e a visualização detalhada de informações bibliométricas provenientes de dados bibliográficos obtidos nas bases científicas reconhecidas como *Scopus*, *Web of Science* (*WoS*) e *PubMed*. Prevê-se a utilização da seguinte equação de pesquisa: «"digital accessibility" OR "accessible tourism" OR “e-tourism” AND "emerging technolog*" AND "cross-border tourism" OR "transboundary tourism"». A pesquisa será limitada a artigos científicos de acesso livre e publicados num intervalo temporal de cinco anos (2020-2025).

Resultados: Com esta metodologia quantitativa pretende-se responder às seguintes questões orientadoras: quais as principais tendências e padrões de publicação na área da acessibilidade digital e tecnologias emergentes aplicadas ao turismo transfronteiriço; que instituições, autores e regiões mais se destacam nesta linha de investigação; que lacunas de investigação podem ser identificadas e que implicações têm para a Euro-região Norte de Portugal e Galiza? Prevê-se que os resultados obtidos permitam construir uma síntese crítica da literatura atual, identificando claramente as principais contribuições teóricas e metodológicas, bem como as oportunidades emergentes para investigações futuras.

Limitações: As limitações deste estudo decorrem essencialmente do seu caráter exploratório e da metodologia bibliométrica escolhida. Ao focar-se exclusivamente nos

artigos científicos indexados em bases de dados específicas (*Scopus*, *WoS* e *PubMed*) e restringidos às publicações de acesso livre num período definido de cinco anos, é possível que não se abranja a totalidade da literatura científica existente, excluindo eventuais contribuições relevantes da literatura cinzenta ou estudos anteriores ao período considerado. Além disso, dada a natureza conceptual e exploratória do estudo, não serão ainda apresentados resultados empíricos ou conclusivos sobre o impacto prático destas tecnologias e da acessibilidade digital na Euro-região Norte de Portugal e Galiza.

Originalidade: Este trabalho constitui um esforço pioneiro ao propor uma revisão bibliométrica sistemática que articula explicitamente a acessibilidade digital e as tecnologias emergentes no contexto específico do turismo transfronteiriço, centrando-se na Euro-região Norte de Portugal e Galiza. A partir dos resultados obtidos, esta abordagem conceptual poderá servir como base sólida para futuras investigações empíricas, auxiliando ainda na formulação de políticas públicas e estratégias empresariais e governamentais direcionadas para a promoção de um turismo mais inclusivo, acessível e tecnologicamente avançado nesta região transfronteiriça europeia.

Palavras-Chave: *Acessibilidade digital; análise bibliométrica; e-tourism; regiões transfronteiriças; tecnologias emergentes; turismo acessível.*

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How Smart Tourism Destinations' Operational Base Impacts Smart Tourism Experiences – The case of Porto

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Abstract

Purpose: This research focused on the perception of Porto as a Smart Tourism Destination (STD) and its ability to provide remarkable Smart Tourism Experiences (STEs). A STD refers to the local provision of smart tourism information and services for visitors, through Internet on mobile and other devices combined with the information and communication technologies (ICTs) development, as well as timely access to tourism information and the convenient use of various internal mobility methods. With this framework, the study sought to understand the visitor's perception and his/her satisfaction degree with a set of 4 elected dimensions of the Porto STD - Operational Base Construct: i) organization and quality of technology-based infrastructures; ii) accessibility to digital technologies; iii) availability of online information; and iv) mobility based on online content.

Additionally, the study aimed to test the hypothetical impact of Porto STD - Operational Base satisfaction degree on the Smart Tourism Experiences in this destination. The Smart Tourism Experiences' value was accessed by two interrelated and important variables: tourists' wellbeing and empathic feelings towards the destination. As for the first variable, the tourists' feelings of physical and emotional well-being were at stake. The second variable could be translated by the tourists' commitment to the destination in such a way that they tend to feel like local citizens. These concepts, their dimensions and items were equated in a theoretical model used for representing the different constructs and the relationship hypotheses above mentioned.

Methodology: Data were collected from 2.577 respondents through face-to-face surveys conducted on 15 October 2024 at key tourist spots in downtown Porto, with the support of 175 junior researchers (ISAG students). To explore the Porto STD – Operational Base Construct, the analysis followed a multi-method approach. First, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) identified the main factors shaping visitors' perceptions. Then, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) validated the factor structure.

Finally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) examined how these factors influenced perceptions of Smart Tourism Ecosystem (STE) value. The model was estimated using maximum likelihood. This integrated approach offered robust insights into how visitors perceive the quality of Porto as a smart tourism destination and its influence on perceived STE value.

Results: The results confirmed the adequacy of the proposed theoretical model, revealing three main factors that shape visitors' experience of Porto as a smart tourism destination. F1 – Displacement Based on Online Content reflects how integrated mobility and digital information influence tourist decision-making. F2 – Organization and Quality of Technology-Based Infrastructure captures the importance of aspects such as cleanliness, energy efficiency, and waste management in shaping perceptions of infrastructure quality. F3 – Digital Technologies Accessibility underlines the relevance of connectivity, namely access to Wi-Fi and GPS, in helping visitors navigate and engage with the destination.

The model highlights the strong relationships between the latent factors and the measured variables. F1 - Displacement Based on Online Content, related to transport synchronization, shows a high association with *Wi-fi network in private places* (e.g. accommodation, shops/ local commerce); while F2, focused on Technology-based infrastructure quality, correlates strongly with *Energy, energy sustainability and waste.* The significant covariances between latent factors suggest that these factors are interrelated. The good fit of the model indicates that the hypothesized relationships between variables are well supported by the data.

The results from the structural equation model further highlight the intricate relationships between the factors that shape overall satisfaction in the context of a STD – Operational Base and STEs. *Infrastructure quality* emerged as the most influential factor, with a strong positive relationship with STEs *Global Satisfaction*. This suggests that visitors place significant value on infrastructure quality, including items such as cleanliness, energy sustainability, and waste management. Therefore, improving these aspects could directly enhance the overall tourist experience and satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of well-maintained, sustainable, and functional infrastructure for the success of STD. Similarly, *Digital Accessibility* also played a critical role in influencing the STEs satisfaction, with a similarly strong positive relationship. This factor emphasizes the need for robust digital connectivity, including accessible Wi-Fi networks and reliable GPS signals. Given the increasing reliance on technology for navigation and communication during stay, ensuring that visitors have access to these digital tools could significantly improve his/her STEs, making it more seamless and convenient. This finding underscores the importance of integrating digital technologies into the STD infrastructure to meet tourists' needs and expectations. While *Transportation factors* also contributed to STEs overall satisfaction, their influence was slightly less pronounced compared to *Infrastructure quality* and *Digital accessibility*. However, coordination and synchronization of transport modes remain essential to ensure smooth mobility experiences, especially in this type of destination where efficient and real-time transport options are expected. Improving transport systems by making them more integrated with online content can further increase satisfaction levels by making travel within the destination more accessible and less time-consuming.

In conclusion, the model suggests that to elevate overall satisfaction in this STD, prioritizing improvements in infrastructure quality and digital accessibility will be crucial. By enhancing these areas, Porto STD can create more convenient, efficient, and enjoyable STEs for tourists.

Originality: As far as the authors know, this line of research is unprecedented in Porto STD.

Keywords: *Smart Tourism Destination; Smart Tourism Experience; Porto.*

Revenue Management Practices in Tourism: A Conceptual Framework

Práticas de Revenue Management no Turismo: Um Quadro Conceptual

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to create a conceptual framework for Revenue Management (RM) in the tourism industry sectors, addressing characteristics, processes, applications, trends and challenges, with the aim of supporting future research.

Methodology: Qualitative research was developed through a conceptual analysis and literature review to identify and analyze academic contributions on RM in tourism, through exploratory research, with a secondary research method, allowing the information to be synthesized and the study to be structured.

Results: The study identified patterns of RM in tourism, highlighting its strategic importance and proposing a framework that organizes practices, trends and directions for future research.

Research limitations: The main limitation was the fragmentation of literature, requiring a strong capacity for synthesis and critical analysis to select the most relevant information.

Originality: This article is one of the first to address the integrated approach between RM and the tourism industry sectors, proposing a conceptual framework and identifying gaps, contributing to the academic and professional advancement of the concept.

Keywords: *Revenue Management; Tourism; Conceptual Framework; Yield Management.*

Funding: This work is financed by national funds through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, IP, within the scope of the reference Projet CiTUR UIDB/04470/2025.

Resumo

Objetivo: Este estudo aponta a criação de um quadro concetual de Revenue Management (RM) sobre os setores de atividade da indústria do turismo, abordando características, processos, aplicações, tendências e desafios, com o objetivo de apoiar investigações futuras.

Metodologia: Optou-se por uma investigação qualitativa através de uma análise concetual e uma revisão da literatura para identificar e analisar contributos académicos sobre RM no turismo, através de uma pesquisa exploratória, com um método de investigação secundário, permitindo sintetizar a informação e estruturar o estudo.

Resultados: O estudo identificou padrões do RM no turismo, destacando a sua importância estratégica e propondo um quadro que organiza as práticas, tendências e direções para futuras pesquisas.

Limitações: A principal limitação foi a fragmentação da literatura, exigindo uma forte capacidade de síntese e análise crítica para selecionar a informação mais relevante.

Originalidade: Este artigo é um dos primeiros a abordar a forma integrada entre o RM e os vários setores de atividade da indústria do turismo, propondo um quadro concetual e identificando lacunas, contribuindo para o avanço académico e profissional do conceito.

Palavras-Chave: *Revenue Management; Turismo; Quadro Concetual; Yield Management.*

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Tourism Fields, Arenas, and Disputes in the Latin American Urban Context: Theoretical-Methodological Approaches

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Abstract

Purpose: To reflect on the theoretical and methodological contributions of the tourism field approach to coastal cities, especially in contexts that discuss the formation of the field as a legitimate space of symbolic struggle.

Methodology: Systematic literature review, analysis of secondary data, and construction of an analytical matrix based on Bourdieu's concepts of social field, capital, and habitus.

Results: In the Latin American context, urban tourism emerges as a field of symbolic conflict, unveiling inequalities, domination logics, and potential pathways for social transformation. To investigate these scenarios, we proposed an analytical matrix to map and analyze the dynamics of struggle within the tourism field in urban contexts.

Research limitations: Lack of empirical application and initial operationalization of the proposed analytical matrix.

Originality: A creative articulation of Bourdieu's theory with urban tourism and the development of a methodological matrix adapted to Latin American contexts. It highlights a critical focus on the symbolic struggles within the tourism field.

Keywords: *Tourism field; Latin America; Urban tourism; Capital; Habitus.*

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The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Social Media Marketing: A Literature Review Focusing on SMEs in Local Accommodation

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming social media marketing in the local accommodation sector, with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It seeks to identify key trends, benefits, and challenges associated with AI adoption in this context.

Methodology: A systematic literature review was conducted following the PRISMA framework. The analysis included peer-reviewed articles and academic sources retrieved from SCOPUS, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and RCAAP, published over the last five years.

Results: The findings indicate that AI significantly enhances customer engagement, improves conversion rates, and increases operational efficiency through tools such as predictive analytics and automated content generation. However, several challenges were identified, including ethical concerns related to data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the need for transparent governance.

Research Limitations: This study is limited by the scope of available literature and the focus on secondary data. Empirical validation through case studies or fieldwork was not conducted, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to all SME contexts.

Originality: This paper contributes to the limited academic discussion on AI in social media marketing for SME local accommodation. It offers a structured synthesis of recent research and provides actionable insights for SMEs aiming to leverage AI tools in their digital marketing strategies, while also highlighting the importance of ethical and sustainable implementation.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Social Media; Local Accommodation; Literature Review*

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Session V – "Marketing Experiences and Niche Tourism Trends"

Chair: Cristiana Matos

Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC)

Relationship Marketing Strategies: Loyalty, Co-creation of Value and Social Responsibility in the Hotel Sector in the Region of Beja (Alentejo)

Estratégias de Marketing Relacional: Fidelização, Cocriação de Valor e Responsabilidade Social no Sector Hoteleiro na Região de Beja (Alentejo)

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Abstract

Purpose: In the context of increasing competitiveness in the hotel sector, customer loyalty has become one of the main strategic objectives of hotel establishments. This research aims to analyze how hotels in the municipality of Beja, in Baixo Alentejo, use relationship marketing, co-creation of value and corporate social responsibility as integrated strategies to increase the satisfaction and loyalty of their customers.

Methodology: The research adopts a quantitative approach, based on the application of a structured questionnaire, developed based on relevant literature. The survey was conducted to the managers of the seven hotel establishments in the municipality of Beja, in order to identify the loyalty practices used, the elements of personalization and co-creation present in customer experience, as well as the perception of the corporate social responsibility actions implemented.

Results: Preliminary results show that there is a growing appreciation of customer-focused strategies, through the personalization of services, rewards programs and emotional engagement. The data also proves a positive correlation between social responsibility actions and the perception of value by customers, reinforcing the importance of sustainable practices in terms of loyalty.

Limitations: The main limitation is related to the small sample size, reduced to hotels in a single municipality, which may condition the generalization of the results. On the other

hand, data collection is based on the perspective of managers and may in the future integrate the vision of customers.

Originality: This research differentiates itself by aggregating three strategic pillars (relationship marketing, co-creation of value and corporate social responsibility) in a joint analysis of loyalty in the hotel sector, focusing on a region with lower tourist density. In doing so, it makes a significant contribution to the formulation of more effective and sustainable loyalty strategies applicable to similar contexts in other regions.

Keywords: *Hospitality; Customer Loyalty; Relationship Marketing; Co-creation of Value; RSC; Lower Alentejo (Beja).*

Resumo

Objetivo: Num contexto de crescente competitividade no setor hoteleiro, a fidelização de clientes tornou-se um dos principais objetivos estratégicos dos estabelecimentos hoteleiros. Esta investigação visa analisar de que forma os hotéis do concelho de Beja, no Baixo Alentejo, recorrem ao marketing relacional, à cocriação de valor e à responsabilidade social corporativa como estratégias integradas para aumentar a satisfação e a fidelização dos seus clientes.

Metodologia: A investigação adota uma abordagem quantitativa, baseada na aplicação de um questionário estruturado, desenvolvido com base na literatura relevante. O inquérito foi dirigido aos gestores dos sete estabelecimentos hoteleiros do concelho de Beja, com o intuito de identificar as práticas de fidelização utilizadas, os elementos de personalização e cocriação presentes na experiência do cliente, bem como a perceção sobre as ações de responsabilidade social corporativa implementadas.

Resultados: Os resultados preliminares mostram que existe uma valorização crescente de estratégias focadas no cliente, em particular através da personalização dos serviços, programas de recompensas e envolvimento emocional. Os dados comprovam também uma correlação positiva entre ações de responsabilidade social e a perceção de valor por parte dos clientes, reforçando a importância de práticas sustentáveis na fidelização.

Limitações: A principal limitação prende-se com a reduzida dimensão da amostra, reduzida aos hotéis de um único concelho, o que pode condicionar a generalização dos resultados. Por outro lado, a recolha de dados baseia-se na perspetiva dos gestores, podendo futuramente integrar a visão dos clientes.

Originalidade: Esta investigação diferencia-se por agregar três pilares estratégicos (marketing de relacionamento, cocriação de valor e responsabilidade social corporativa) numa análise conjunta da fidelização no setor hoteleiro, focando-se numa região de menor densidade turística. Ao realizá-lo, oferece um contributo significativo para a formulação de estratégias de fidelização mais eficazes e sustentáveis, aplicáveis a contextos semelhantes noutras regiões.

Palavras-Chave: *Hotelaria; Fidelização de Clientes; Marketing de Relacionamento; Cocriação de Valor; RSC; Baixo Alentejo (Beja).*

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Motivations, Niches and Special Interest Tourism: Geocaching and preliminary contribution to Place Marketing

Motivações, Nichos e Turismo de Interesse Especial: Geocaching e contributo preliminar para o Place Marketing

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Abstract

Objectives: To understand the importance of geocaching as a promoter of tourist destinations and as a lever for the development of regions in specific territorial contexts (e.g. northern Portugal, in particular the case of Guimarães).

Methodology: From an exploratory perspective, this preliminary study presents a case study, focusing on the analysis of the Guimarães context with the aim of exploring, describing and explaining phenomena within its Portuguese context and understanding the role of geocaching in promoting territorial marketing (of Guimarães).

Results: Preliminary results show that the practice of geocaching can be an important instrument to aid in territorial promotion, in particular by enhancing the image of a destination and the notoriety of the territorial brand.

Research Limitations: As this is an exploratory study, only preliminary insights are presented, and it is not possible to generalize the results obtained. Future studies should allow, by applying questionnaires to visitors, to assess the impact that geocaching represents in the communication of a tourist destination.

Originality: This preliminary research explores the role of nature tourists in the sustainable development of territories (in particular, the case of geocaching). From an interdisciplinary perspective, the study presents insights for niche tourism and place marketing.

Keywords: *Geocaching; Local Development; Niche Tourism; Place Marketing; Special Interest Tourism*

Resumo

Objetivo: Compreender a importância do *geocaching* como promotor de destinos turísticos e alavanca do desenvolvimento de regiões em contextos específicos territoriais (e.g. norte de Portugal, em particular o caso de Guimarães).

Metodologia: Numa perspetiva exploratória, é apresentado neste estudo preliminar um estudo de caso, focando-se na análise do contexto de Guimarães com o objetivo de explorar, descrever e explicar fenómenos dentro do seu contexto português e de compreender o papel do *geocaching* na promoção do marketing territorial (de Guimarães).

Resultados: Resultados preliminares evidenciam que a prática do *geocaching* poderá ser um importante instrumento de auxílio de promoção territorial, em particular potenciando a imagem de um destino e a notoriedade da marca territorial.

Limitações do estudo: Tratando-se de um estudo exploratório, são apresentados somente insights preliminares, não sendo possível generalizar os resultados obtidos. Estudos futuros deverão permitir, com a aplicação de questionários junto de visitantes, avaliar o impacto que o *geocaching* representa na comunicação de um destino turístico.

Originalidade: Este trabalho explora o papel dos turistas de natureza no desenvolvimento sustentável de territórios (em particular, o caso do *geocaching*). Numa perspetiva interdisciplinar, o estudo apresenta insights para o turismo de nichos e para o *place marketing*.

Palavras-Chave: *Desenvolvimento Local; Geocaching; Place Marketing; Turismo De Nichos; Turismo de Interesse Especial*

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Regenerating with Emotion: Transforming Tradition into Innovation in Cultural Tourism through Experiential Marketing

Regenerar com Emoção: Transformar a Tradição em Inovação no Turismo Cultural através do Marketing Experiencial

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Abstract

Purpose: This ongoing study aims to explore how the integration of traditional handicrafts into experiential marketing strategies can contribute to the development of more sustainable, regenerative, and emotionally engaging cultural tourism. Focusing on the Euro-Region of Galicia and Northern Portugal, the research explores how handicrafts —as living cultural heritage and a symbol of identity—can be repositioned as a strategic asset in the creation of distinctive tourism experiences, promoting authenticity, emotional connection to place, and the appreciation of local communities.

Methodology The research adopts a qualitative, exploratory, and interpretative approach, focused on analyzing the dynamics between experiential marketing, handicrafts, and cultural tourism in cross-border territories. The study uses a case study approach in the Euro-Region, with data collected via focus groups and interviews with tourists, artisans, and institutional actors. This methodological strategy aims to capture perceptions, experiences, and meanings associated with handicrafts as a tourism resource, allowing a deeper understanding of their potential as drivers of differentiation, co-creation, and territorial regeneration.

Results: Although the research is still in progress, preliminary data indicate a growing appreciation of handicrafts as an authentic cultural experience, particularly when linked to participatory practices and identity-driven narratives. Preliminary insights suggest that tourists develop stronger emotional ties when engaging directly with artisans and their creative processes. From the artisans' perspective, there is a progressive openness to innovation and adaptation of traditional practices to new tourism consumption contexts, especially when framed by sensory and relational marketing strategies. These early observations suggest that handicrafts can play a central role in the design of tourism offers that are distinctive, sustainable, and culturally rooted.

Research limitations: As the study is still under development, the main limitation lies in the lack of consolidated empirical data that would allow more robust validation of the emerging assumptions. The qualitative and exploratory nature of the approach, while suitable for understanding cultural and experiential phenomena, does not support statistical generalization. Moreover, the territorial specificity of the Euro-Region may limit direct transference of results to other geographic contexts.

Originality: This research is original in its innovative articulation of traditional handicrafts with experiential marketing strategies, within the emerging framework of regenerative tourism. By focusing on the co-creation of authentic and emotionally meaningful cultural experiences, the study contributes to rethinking handicrafts not merely as products, but as relational, symbolic, and transformative processes. It offers a novel perspective on the role of craftsmanship in destination differentiation and identity building. Furthermore, by centering the analysis in a cross-border region, the study adds insight into the valorization of intangible heritage in cross-border contexts.

Keywords: *Handicrafts; Cultural Tourism; Experiential Marketing; Emotional Connection; Regenerative Tourism; Sustainability.*

Resumo

Objetivo: Este estudo, atualmente em curso, procura explorar de que forma a integração do artesanato em estratégias de marketing experiencial pode contribuir para o desenvolvimento de um turismo cultural mais sustentável, regenerativo e emocionalmente significativo. Centrado na Euro-Região da Galiza e Norte de Portugal, analisa-se como o artesanato — enquanto património vivo e expressão de identidade — pode ser reposicionado como um recurso estratégico na criação de experiências turísticas autênticas, potenciando a ligação emocional ao lugar e valorizando as comunidades locais.

Metodologia: A investigação segue uma abordagem qualitativa, exploratória e interpretativa, com base num estudo de caso na Euro-Região da Galiza e Norte de Portugal. A recolha de dados incluirá grupos de foco com turistas e artesãos, bem como entrevistas semiestruturadas a agentes institucionais. Pretende-se compreender perceções e significados associados ao artesanato como recurso turístico, destacando o seu potencial enquanto elemento diferenciador, de cocriação e regeneração territorial.

Resultados: Os dados preliminares indicam uma valorização crescente do artesanato enquanto experiência cultural, sobretudo quando associada a práticas participativas e narrativas identitárias. Os turistas tendem a desenvolver ligações emocionais mais fortes quando interagem com artesãos e participam nos processos criativos. Por sua vez, os produtores demonstram crescente abertura à inovação e à adaptação das práticas tradicionais ao turismo experiencial. Estes indícios apontam para o potencial do artesanato na construção de propostas turísticas autênticas e sustentáveis.

Limitações: A principal limitação decorre da fase atual da investigação, ainda sem dados empíricos consolidados. A abordagem qualitativa não permite generalizações estatísticas e o foco regional poderá limitar a transferência dos resultados para outros contextos. Tais limitações são assumidas como parte de um processo exploratório, com potencial para estudos futuros mais alargados.

Originalidade: A originalidade do estudo reside na articulação inovadora entre artesanato, marketing experiencial e turismo regenerativo. Propõe-se uma leitura do

artesanato não apenas como produto, mas como processo simbólico e relacional com impacto no posicionamento dos destinos culturais. A dimensão transfronteiriça acrescenta uma perspetiva pouco explorada sobre a valorização do património imaterial em contextos de cooperação regional.

Palavras-Chave: *Artesanato; Turismo Cultural; Marketing Experiencial; Ligação Emocional; Turismo Regenerativo; Sustentabilidade*

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Religion and Nationality as Key Determinants in Choosing the Portuguese Ways

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Abstract

Purpose: This research focuses on examining how pilgrims' religious background and country of origin influence their decision-making process when choosing between the two Portuguese routes of the Santiago way, namely the Central and Coastal routes. Pilgrimage, as a form of tourism, refers to travel undertaken by pilgrims to visit religiously significant sites, motivated by religiosity, faith, personal reflection, or the desire for spiritual renewal. While previous studies have examined the role of religion in consumer behavior, there remains a gap in the literature concerning how demographic factors, such as religious affiliation and nationality, influence pilgrims' route choices. The decision-making process for pilgrims is multifaceted, with spiritual and cultural motivations interacting with practical considerations. Pilgrims are not only drawn to the religious significance of a particular route but are also influenced by factors such as accessibility, duration, and the cultural context of the pilgrimage.

The Portuguese ways offer two distinct routes: the Portuguese Central Way, which is more closely associated with religious traditions and historical significance, and the Portuguese Coastal Way, which is often seen as less demanding, more accessible, and more touristic.

Despite the spiritual or religious nature of both routes, these ways appeal to different types of pilgrims, each with their own motivations for undertaking the journey. For instance, pilgrims from countries with stronger religious traditions may be more inclined to choose the Central route, while those from secular or non-Christian backgrounds may prefer the Coastal route for its less intense spiritual demands and its ease of access.

This research addresses the gap by investigating how pilgrims' religious background and nationality, as well as individual characteristics such as age, gender, and motivation, interact to influence route choice.

Methodology: This study adopts a quantitative approach to explore how pilgrims' religious backgrounds and countries of origin influence their choice between the Central and Coastal routes of the Portuguese Ways. Data were collected in 2022 through surveys administered to pilgrims at the end of their journey. To capture the complexity of decision-making, a multilevel logistic regression model was employed, allowing for the analysis of both individual-level factors (such as age, gender, motivations, group size, and mode of transport) and country-level variables (including religious affiliation and national religiosity). This approach highlights the interaction between personal characteristics and broader cultural contexts in shaping route selection, offering new insights into pilgrimage behaviour in an increasingly diverse and global context.

Results: The results reveal that both individual characteristics and cultural background significantly influence pilgrims' choices between the Central and Coastal routes of the Portuguese Ways. Gender, age, travel motivations, group size, and mode of transport emerged as relevant factors: for example, women, solo travellers, and those using alternative modes of transport (such as bicycles) showed a greater tendency to choose the Coastal Route. In contrast, pilgrims with religious motivations and those travelling in groups were more likely to opt for the Central Route, which is perceived as more traditional in spiritual terms.
At the country level, the influence of cultural and religious context was also evident. Pilgrims from countries with a stronger Christian presence were more inclined to choose the Central Route, while those from more secular societies tended to favour the Coastal Route. The results suggest that route selection is not only a matter of personal preference or convenience but also reflects deeper cultural and spiritual dimensions. This reinforces the importance of considering both micro-level and macro-level influences when analysing contemporary pilgrimage patterns.

Originality: This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on pilgrimage tourism by focusing on the under-explored role of religious affiliation and nationality in pilgrims' route choices, specifically on the Portuguese Ways of the Santiago. While much of the existing literature has explored the religious, spiritual and cultural motivations of pilgrims, as well as general decision-making in tourism, few studies have directly examined how demographic factors, such as religious background and country of origin, interact to influence route selection.

By integrating both individual-level variables (e.g., age, gender, motivations, group size) and country-level factors (e.g., religious affiliation and the percentage of Christians in the pilgrims' countries of origin), this study provides a more nuanced understanding of pilgrimage decision-making. The use of multilevel modeling allows for a robust analysis of how these factors operate at both the individual and national levels, which is an approach not often applied in pilgrimage studies.

The originality of this study lies in its novel focus on the intersection of religious, cultural, and national influences on pilgrimage route selection, offering insights that are critical for understanding pilgrims' preferences on the Portuguese routes. Furthermore, the study contributes valuable findings that can inform the development of targeted marketing strategies and tailored services for pilgrimage tourism, an area of practical relevance that has received limited attention in literature.

Through its innovative approach, this research expands the scope of pilgrimage tourism studies by addressing a gap in the understanding of how religious and demographic variables impact decision-making processes in a specific pilgrimage context, namely the Portuguese Ways. This research also lays the groundwork for future studies that could explore similar dynamics in other pilgrimage destinations, further enriching the field.

Keywords: *Pilgrimage; Tourism; Route Choice; Santiago Ways; Multilevel Modeling.*

The Experience Economy in Wine Tourism: A Case Study of the Essence of Wine Event 2025

A Economia da Experiência no Enoturismo: Estudo de Caso do Evento Essência do Vinho 2025

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Abstract

Purpose: The Experience Economy, proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1999), emphasises the creation of value through memorable experiences that involve consumers in the dimensions of entertainment, education, aesthetics and escapism. In the context of wine tourism, events assume a central role in facilitating these experiences. In this context, this study aims to analyse the experience of visitors to the Essence of Wine Event 2025, held at the Palácio da Bolsa, in the city of Porto, which is considered a national benchmark in the wine segment and is known for providing an immersive experience for different profiles of participants. The research seeks to understand how the four dimensions of the Experience Economy are manifested in this urban wine tourism event and what impact they have on visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

Methodology: The study is based on a quantitative approach, using primary data collected through a questionnaire survey. The sample is made up of 1344 visitors to the event, surveyed in person between 20 and 23 February 2025 at the 21st edition of Essence of Wine. The data was processed using descriptive statistical techniques, analysing variables associated with participants' motivations, consumption behaviour, satisfaction and intention to return.

Results: The results show high satisfaction with the aesthetics of the event (4.3 out of 5 for the location of the event) and with the overall experience (79.5% satisfied and very satisfied). Motivations associated with entertainment and education, such as wine tasting (27.6%) and acquiring knowledge (16.4%), highlight the importance of these dimensions in the experience. The intention to return (78.3%) reinforces the emotional impact and involvement of the participants. This evidence shows that the event integrates elements of the four domains proposed by Pine and Gilmore. Thus, as a case study, Essence of

Wine 2025 is a privileged space to observe how wine tourism events can integrate multiple dimensions of experience, reinforcing the strategic role of sensory (Lindstrom, 2005) and experiential marketing in urban tourism. Additionally, the effectiveness of sensory marketing is supported by recent reviews highlighting its capacity to influence consumer behaviour at both subconscious and technological levels (Pandey & Tripathi, 2025). Meanwhile, the integration of immersive sensory environments, enhanced by technology, has been identified as a promising approach in the design of wine experiences (Velasco, Vargas, & Petit, 2024). The importance of contextual factors is also emphasised by Chu, Wang, and Liu (2025), who further underline the necessity of understanding individual preferences to enhance satisfaction with these experiences.

Research limitations: The study is based on a non-probability sample, meaning that it may not accurately reflect the characteristics of the population as a whole. Furthermore, the research centres on a single edition and a single event, so future research could extend the scope to other contexts or apply comparative methods.

Originality: The main contribution of the study consists of applying the Experience Economy model to the context of wine tourism in Portugal, using a real event and empirical data to evidence how sensory and immersive experiences influence visitor behaviour and satisfaction.

Keywords: *Experience Economy; Wine Tourism; Event Tourism; Consumer Behaviour; Sensory Marketing.*

Resumo

Objetivo: A Economia da Experiência, proposta por Pine e Gilmore (1999), destaca a criação de valor através de vivências memoráveis que envolvem os consumidores nas dimensões de entretenimento, educação, estética e escapismo. No contexto do enoturismo, os eventos assumem um papel central na facilitação destas experiências. Neste âmbito, o presente estudo tem como objetivo analisar a experiência dos visitantes do evento Essência do Vinho 2025, realizado no Palácio da Bolsa, na cidade do Porto, considerado uma referência nacional no segmento vínico e conhecido por proporcionar uma vivência imersiva a diversos perfis de participantes. A investigação procura compreender de que forma as quatro dimensões da Economia da Experiência se manifestam neste evento de enoturismo urbano e qual o seu impacto na satisfação e fidelização dos visitantes.

Metodologia: O estudo baseia-se numa abordagem quantitativa, com recurso a dados primários recolhidos através de inquérito por questionário. A amostra é composta por 1344 visitantes do evento, inquiridos presencialmente entre os dias 20 a 23 de fevereiro de 2025 na 21ª edição do Essência do Vinho. Os dados foram tratados por técnicas de estatística descritiva, analisando-se variáveis associadas às motivações, comportamento de consumo, satisfação, e intenção de voltar dos participantes.

Resultados: Os resultados revelam elevada satisfação com a estética do evento (4,3 em 5 para o local do evento) e com a experiência global (79,5% de satisfeitos e muito satisfeitos). As motivações associadas ao entretenimento e à educação, como a prova de vinhos (27,6%) e a aquisição de conhecimento (16,4%), evidenciam a relevância destas dimensões na experiência vivida. A intenção de voltar (78,3%) reforça o impacto emocional e o envolvimento dos participantes. Estas evidências mostram que o evento integra elementos dos quatro domínios propostos por Pine e Gilmore. Assim, como

estudo de caso, o Essência do Vinho 2025 revela-se um espaço privilegiado para observar como eventos enoturísticos podem integrar múltiplas dimensões da experiência, reforçando o papel estratégico do marketing sensorial (Lindstrom, 2005) e experiencial no turismo urbano. Adicionalmente, a eficácia do marketing sensorial encontra sustento em revisões recentes que destacam sua capacidade de atuar sobre o comportamento do consumidor a nível subconsciente e tecnológico (Pandey & Tripathi, 2025), enquanto a integração de ambientes sensoriais imersivos, potenciada por tecnologias, tem sido identificada como promissora no desenho de experiências vínicas (Velasco, Vargas, & Petit, 2024). A relevância de fatores contextuais é também enfatizada por Chu, Wang e Liu (2025), que destacam ainda a importância de compreender as preferências individuais como forma de potenciar a satisfação com as experiências.

Limitações: O estudo baseia-se numa amostra não probabilística, isto é, pode não refletir com precisão as características da população como um todo. Além disso, a investigação centra-se numa única edição e num único evento, pelo que futuras pesquisas poderão ampliar o escopo para outros contextos ou aplicar métodos comparativos.

Originalidade: A principal contribuição do estudo reside na aplicação do modelo da Economia da Experiência ao contexto do enoturismo em Portugal, utilizando um evento real e dados empíricos para evidenciar como experiências sensoriais e imersivas influenciam o comportamento e a satisfação dos visitantes. Trata-se de uma abordagem ainda pouco explorada na literatura portuguesa sobre eventos vínicos.

Palavras-Chave: *Economia da Experiência; Enoturismo; Turismo de Eventos; Comportamento do Consumidor; Marketing Sensorial.*

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Session VI – "Governance, Sustainability and Tourism for Inclusive Development"

Chair: Kevin Hemsworth

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A Study on Disaster Resilience Assessment of the Hotel Industry-Taking Taiwan as an Example

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Abstract

Purpose: Taiwan is located at a vulnerable area, operating a hotel in Taiwan has a very high risk of disaster. When a disaster strikes unfortunately, it is easy to produce serious losses. How to make the hotel industry have a certain degree of disaster resilience for responding to frequent disaster events, and the establishment of a specific and systematic hotel disaster resilience assessment model that meets practical needs has become a critical issue.

Methodology: Therefore, this study intends to conduct qualitative and quantitative research, through a combination of literature review, interviews with experts to prepare an indicator system of the disaster-resistance in hotel industry, and index screening using the Modified Delphi Method (MDM). In addition, DEMATEL-based ANP (DANP), would be used to analyze the causality between indicators and weight of indicators.

Results: This study is the tourist hotels in Taiwan will be selected the research objects, to evaluate the disaster resilience of hotels in different regions by considering the current situation of environmental location, social economy, infrastructure construction, organization and preparation, economic support, disaster response and adjustment, post-disaster recovery and compensation, etc. It is hoped that the research results can be used as a reference for the government to formulate relevant hotel disaster resilience assessment criteria and management strategies and improve the disaster management benefits of hotel industry in Taiwan.

Originality: At present, there is no relevant research on hotel disaster evaluation that takes each stage of disaster management into consideration.

Keywords: *Disaster Resilience; Modified Delphi Method.*

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Advancing the Sustainability Journey of Tourism SMEs through a Regenerative Tourism Lens

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the emerging importance of regenerative tourism as an approach to support tourism destinations and businesses in moving beyond sustainability for the long-term resilience of the community and place. Additionally, it seeks to test a novel approach for the implementation of regenerative tourism practices in 80 SMEs across 5 European countries of Ireland, Iceland, Finland, Poland and The Netherlands. This research is an output of an EU funded SMP EISMEA project.

Methodology: A quantitative approach was adopted to gather SME sentiment and actions relating to regenerative tourism throughout the duration of the project. A five-point regenerative tourism (RT) framework for tourism SMEs was developed based on the emerging principles of RT in the literature to include: *Champions local places; Benefiting Host Communities; Tackling Climate Action; Empowering Responsible Visitors and Ensuring Long-term Business Sustainability.* A self-reporting scale-based measurement tool was completed by participating SMEs three times to determine progress throughout the implementation of a regenerative tourism programme.

Results: The results across all SMEs varied depending on the construct measured with the greatest level of activities supporting local places and host communities and a clear commitment to place identity and culture. At the other end of the scale many businesses were struggling with implementing concrete climate action activities and required additional support in addressing these outcomes.

Research Limitations: The data gathered was limited to the SMEs participating in the project and they were chosen based on a set of criteria which included an already existing motivation towards sustainability. Additionally, the self-reported nature of the data collection, which was not third party validated is also a limitation.

Originality: The literature on regenerative tourism to date has been grounded in destinations with an emphasis on place-based principles and constructs. There is emerging literature regarding sustainability for tourism SMEs (Gossling & Reinhold, (2024); Durrani, et. al., (2024); Khan et.al., (2023)) but there is a dearth in relation to RT for business practices and little if any evidence of the tourism SMEs contribution. This paper presents a novel approach for tourism SMEs in advancing regenerative tourism application, increasing awareness of what it means to be regenerative but also providing businesses with the knowledge and tools to implement regenerative principles within their place. This is especially valuable for destination management organisations (DMOs) implementing regenerative tourism initiatives.

Keywords: *Regenerative Tourism; Tourism SMEs; Sustainability Practices; Community Resilience; Place-Based Approaches.*

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The business trip as a travel between work and play

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Abstract

Purpose: Although business travel has traditionally been regarded as a predominantly professional activity, earlier research positioned tourism-related pursuits as incidental or secondary to the trip (e.g., Doyle & Nathan, 2001; Gustafson, 2014). In contrast, more recent scholarship introducing the concept of "bleisure" highlights the growing significance of recreational and pleasurable elements within business travel (Lichy & McLeay, 2018; Walia, Kour, Choundaty, & Jasrotia, 2022). Building on this shift in perspective, the current analysis explores when, where, and how tourism-related benefits shape the lived experiences and enduring memories of business travelers.

Methodology: This paper offers an analytical review of our previous research on business travelers, with a particular focus on a decade-long series of studies involving Israeli business travelers. We synthesize and reframe key insights drawn from three distinct phases of research. The first phase, conducted between 2011 and 2014, involved in-depth interviews with business travelers. The second phase, carried out between 2014 and 2016, included the development and analysis of a quantitative survey. The third phase took place during the global COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021), a period marked by widespread travel restrictions and lockdowns. Collectively, this body of work resulted in six academic publications, which form the foundation of the current analysis.

Results: In this study, we examine when, where, and how tourism plays a central role in shaping the business trip experience by adopting a time-based framework. Specifically, we highlight three interrelated phases of the journey: the passenger experience, the destination experience, and post-trip memories.

The passenger experience includes time spent in airports and aboard aircraft, often marked by tiring procedures such as security checks, long lines, and cramped seating. Business travelers, however, tend to cope better with these challenges due to their frequent travel, familiarity with airports, and access to upgraded services (Unger, Uriely, & Fuchs, 2016). They may even experience "moments of relaxation," as their knowledge of airport routines and flight procedures helps reduce stress and improve efficiency. Although not all fly business class, many benefit from airline loyalty programs that offer added comforts and reinforce their sense of social status (Unger, 2020). The airport serves not only as a transit point but also as a symbolic space of routine, efficiency, and prestige. Though primarily work-oriented, it is often viewed as a privileged environment—especially in executive lounges, where mobility, work, and tourism intersect through comfort, privacy, and exclusive amenities. These semi-private spaces reduce stress and accommodate both professional and leisure activities, blurring the line between work and relaxation (Unger et al., 2016; Unger, 2020; Unger & Uriely, 2023). The in-flight experience is more closely linked to leisure, despite discomforts like cramped seating and limited privacy (Unger et al., 2016; 2020). Business travelers often adopt psychological detachment, aided by the absence of connectivity, allowing for a rare sense of 'time off.' Many use flights to read, watch movies, or listen to music, making the

journey a valued period of uninterrupted rest and reflection (Unger et al., 2016; Unger, 2020).

The destination experience—Although primarily associated with intense work and rigid schedules, making it the most demanding and least flexible phase (Unger et al., 2016; 2020; 2021), the destination stay also includes elements of tourist-like desires, such as the quest for authentic cultural encounters. This phase reflects a hybrid experience where work obligations coexist with tourism-related benefits. The workload is often overwhelming, shaped by performance pressures and the need to maintain professionalism in unfamiliar cultural settings, leading to stress and limited autonomy (Unger et al., 2016; 2020). However, these diverse environments also enable meaningful intercultural exchanges. Despite globalization, cultural differences still surface in communication, negotiation, hierarchy, and etiquette. Engaging closely with local colleagues in offices, restaurants, and public spaces exposes travelers to everyday cultural practices, such as cuisine and social norms (Unger et al., 2016; 2020; 2021). These interactions offer access to “real people” and “authentic local culture,” typically hidden from traditional tourists (Unger et al., 2020).

The memories – The final phase of the business travel experience reveals how tourism shapes the retrospective meaning travelers assign to their journeys. Unger and Uriely (2022), in a study during the COVID-19 pandemic, found that many recalled elements resembling leisure tourism. These “bleisure” memories—formed during moments of free time, site visits, meals, or cultural exposure—are often vivid and emotionally meaningful. This phase underscores the lasting impact of tourism: while business trips are work-focused, the memories that endure often highlight personal meaning, cultural immersion, and experiential richness, revealing the inseparability of tourism from the business travel experience.

Originality: Our studies show that leisure and tourist-like experiences occur throughout the business trip—during the passenger phase, at the destination, and in post-trip memories. This supports the “bleisure” perspective, challenging earlier views that saw such experiences as marginal (Doyle & Nathan, 2001; Gustafson, 2014). However, our analysis suggests that the call to extend destination stays for leisure (e.g., Lichy & McLeay, 2018) requires further development.

First, our studies show that moments of relaxation already occur during the passenger phase, indicating that “bleisure” should not be limited to the destination. Second, tourist-like experiences—such as authentic encounters with local colleagues—often emerge through work-related activities. This suggests that the hybridity of “bleisure” is more complex than a simple mix of work and leisure. Desired experiences, like the pursuit of authenticity, can occur through non-touristic activities outside the “tourist environmental bubble” (Cohen, 1972).

Our analysis suggests that the authenticity experienced by business travelers is partial. While they believe they engage with “real people” and “local culture,” this aligns with Wang’s (1999) concept of “constructed symbolic authenticity,” where authenticity is shaped by subjective perception. By crossing the “tourist environmental bubble,” business travelers access what many leisure tourists seek but rarely achieve—authentic cultural encounters. However, their experience lacks “existential authenticity,” which involves being true to oneself. Unlike leisure tourists, business travelers must manage impressions to fulfill professional goals, limiting personal expression. Thus, they achieve more symbolic than existential authenticity.

Our study of grounded business travelers during COVID-19 found that tourism-related experiences played a key role in shaping their memories and self-reflections. These experiences often serve as markers of personal satisfaction and identity. Drawing on multiple-self theory (Conner & Barrett, 2012; Kahneman, 2011), we suggest that leisure

moments are retrospectively idealized as peak experiences by the “remembering self” and later integrated by the “believing self” into broader life evaluations. These “bleisure memories” (Unger & Uriely, 2022) highlight the lasting impact of tourism within business travel.

Keywords: *business travelers, tourist experience, bleisure, authenticity, memories*

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Internal Turbulence: Measuring the Occupational Stress in Travel Agencies' Employees

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Abstract

Purpose: Stress has been recognised as one of the current health concerns (Chua et al., 2022), being a body's response to perceived pressure (Mental Health Foundation, 2022), and it can lead to physical and psychological changes. Among its many sources, the workplace is a significant contributor, generating the phenomenon referred to as occupational stress. When environmental demands exceed an individual's coping ability, the strain can negatively affect overall health (Cho et al., 2014). In the tourism industry, occupational stress is particularly problematic. It is linked to lower job and life satisfaction levels, reduced productivity, diminished innovation, and declining employee well-being (Chang & Chang, 2007; Chua et al., 2022). Given these consequences, monitoring and managing the causes of occupational stress is essential. This study aims to develop and validate a scale to measure occupational stress among travel agents.

Methodology: We used quantitative methodology following scale validation procedures through Confirmatory Factor Analysis based on CB-SEM by SmartPLS software. The sample was 850 travel agency Portuguese employees, and the data collected was from online questionnaires with 81 variables extracted from the literature.

Results: The values of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE and discriminant validity achieved values adequate to validate the scale with 36 statistically significant variables to measure occupational stress. The variables are divided into the following dimensions: Physical and operational environment, Task ambiguity, Insufficiency of skills, Job insecurity, Function limits, Lack of reward, Responsibilities, Work overload.

Research limitations: The limitation of this research is in the sample, since data collection was done in a single country. The results may change in different economic, technological and operational contexts. Therefore, it is suggested that the study be replicated in different countries to improve the level of generalisation of the findings.

Originality: We offer a broad and up-to-date scale of occupational stress for travel agency employees, since there are few studies in the literature on the subject in this subsector. In addition, the results bring implications for stress management in companies and serve as a basis for other causal models of stress on employee performance or on the Burnout syndrome.

Keywords: *Occupational stress; Travel agency employees; Scale development;* Burnout syndrome.

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Stakeholders' Perception and Attitudes Towards Education and Career Development in Tourism – Evidences from Croatia

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Abstract

Context: Since 2020, tourism high school vocational education system in Croatia has been undergoing a significant structural and institutional transformation, transitioning from prevailing theory-based towards more practice-oriented and innovative curricula. Among many challenges that triggered such transformation, eight main critical issues have been identified during the past two decades: 1) persistent weaknesses of knowledge and lack of practical skills among freshly graduated students, 2) low effectiveness of outdated curricula, 3) limited practice-based learning opportunities, 4) outdated equipment and infrastructure in educational institutions, 5) deep-rooted public perception of tourism-related careers as of lower value, while jobs in tourism are generally perceived as low-paid and formally accessible to everyone, 6) continuous emigration of freshly graduated students towards high-income countries with better employment opportunities, 7) lack of lifelong learning programs, and 8) insufficient internationalization of education. These issues did not only affect the efficiency of vocational high school system or the employability of freshly graduated students, but their impacts are much broader and complex. They primarily refer to decreasing competitiveness of the human resources in tourism, accompanied with a declining labor productivity and overall weaker business performance of tourism companies. Furthermore, the impacts were also reflected in the higher education system for tourism, which is forced to simplify curricula and lower criteria to maintain the number of students and the continuity in delivering tourism-related study programs. And finally, the lower popularity of pursuing career and jobs in tourism has resulted in below average salaries and increasing inflow of unskilled labor from low-income countries, which has been further on reflected in major social changes and growing dissatisfaction among local population in tourism destinations.

Purpose: The motivation for conducting this research comes from co-authors' experiences and personal involvement in creating contemporary curricula and practical solutions associated with tourism-related education and employment. The main purpose of this study is to summarize and discuss recent advancements and challenges of upgrading tourism education and training system in Croatia, and to suggest some policy recommendations aimed at improving tourism-related educational system and enhancing the image of tourism careers and jobs in the society. Three pivotal dimensions underpin the analytical framework of this research: a) high school students' perception and motivation to pursue their careers in tourism and hospitality, b) vocational high school teachers' attitudes regarding education system, learning outcomes and

employment practices in tourism and hospitality, and c) the impact assessment and efficiency of the project of upgrading the network of education and training hubs in Croatia represented by regional centers of competence in tourism and hospitality.

Methodology: This study analyses three stakeholders' point of view using a mixed methodology consisting of thematic analysis, literature review, group discussions and conducting two surveys. The approach and study design are based on empirical and practical findings from previously conducted studies, mainly scientific research and various project activities related to the improvement of vocational high school system for tourism in Croatia. The research was carried out among high school students and their teachers, and representatives of six center of competence in tourism and hospitality in Croatia.

Results: The research showed that new generations (Gen Z and Gen Alpha) have positive attitudes towards careers in tourism and hospitality and considers them fun, exciting and fulfilling, as such careers provide opportunities for frequent travel and communication with people of different profiles and cultural background. On the other hand, they see certain challenges of working in tourism and hospitality such as long and uneven working hours, as well as some potential health and safety hazards. Although findings suggest declining motivation among new generations for developing careers in tourism and hospitality, data showed that students enrolled in tourism and hospitality programs are quite confident to find their jobs in that profession after they have completed their studies. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a large deficit of formally educated and competent personnel on tourism labor market, accompanied with a decreasing number of students enrolled in vocational high school programs for tourism and hospitality. The findings also revealed a large gap between students' knowledge and skills acquired in vocational schools and of those required by employers in tourism and hospitality, but also a large gap between personal perception and reality of specialized tourism education opportunities among students. Finally, data analysis proved that Croatia has a well-established and prospective vocational education system for tourism and hospitality but has poor image among employers and young generations. Among the key policy recommendations, the state market regulation of tourism employment and the improvement of 'dual education system' in tourism and hospitality are strongly suggested.

Research limitations: This study is based on selective literature and findings from a 4-years exploratory research project conducted only in Croatia. Generalizability of these findings to other countries and their vocational education systems for tourism and hospitality requires further considerations and investigations.

Originality: The originality of this research stems from connecting several studies and various stakeholders' points of view regarding the vocational education system for tourism and hospitality into single unit that could serve as a case study to the other researchers.

Keywords: *Tourism; Vocational Education and Training; Employment; Croatia*

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Innovating Tourism in Basilicata: The Role of Digital Transformation

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Abstract

Basilicata, a region in Southern Italy, is emerging as a tourist destination thanks to the enhancement of its natural and cultural heritage with new technologies. This study analyses the impact of digital transformation in the regional tourism sector, identifying the key innovations that are contributing to its sustainable development. The technological tools adopted in the research project aim to improve tourism experience and promote smart and inclusive tourism.

Purpose: This study investigate how digital transformation contributes to the development of a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism model in the Basilicata region, an emerging destination in Southern Italy. It aims to identify the main digital innovations adopted locally and assess their impact on tourism competitiveness and territorial governance.

Methodology: A qualitative, multi-method approach was employed, based on the analysis of case studies, technical documentation, and academic literature. The research focused on evaluating digital maturity, smart destination practices, and the integration of technologies such as 3D modelling, IoT platforms, and participatory mapping tools. The applications and testing of the innovative tools in the Lucania study areas will be part of a replicable smart tourism model.

Results: Digital tools have significantly improved tourism planning, accessibility and flow management in Basilicata. Technologies such as drone mapping and interactive maps have improved heritage enhancement and environmental monitoring. Local communities have benefited from participatory digital platforms that have fostered engagement and co-creation. These interventions have promoted slow tourism, improved resilience and contributed to a more balanced spatial distribution of visitors.

Originality: This research contributes to the literature by presenting Basilicata as a replicable model of smart tourism. It demonstrates how digital innovation, when combined with participatory and sustainable planning, can transform rural and underdeveloped regions into competitive and resilient tourism destinations.

Keywords: *Digital Innovation; Sustainable Tourism; Technological Tools; Smart Tourism Destination.*

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Session VII – "Regenerative Pathways and Sustainability in Tourism"

Chair: Susana Mesquita

ISAG – European Business School and Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC)

Between Growth and Pressure: How Tourism Shapes Porto's Local Economy

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to evaluate the socioeconomic impact of tourism in Porto, Portugal, from the perspective of its residents and tourists. As one of the most visited cities in Southern Europe, Porto has experienced significant tourism-driven transformations. The research explores the extent to which tourism influences economic development, employment opportunities, perceptions of price inflation, and overall quality of life.

Methodology: The data (N=906) were collected through a face-to-face survey conducted on 6 November 2023, targeting local residents and tourists. The variables assessed — adapted from Qiu et al. (2018), Rasoolimanesh et al. (2023), Andrade-Suárez & Caamaño-Franco (2020), and Han et al. (2023) — include perceived economic benefits, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, perceptions of price inflation, and the perceived need for regulatory control over tourism development.

Results: The confirmatory factor analysis reveals significant relationships between key constructs such as perceived economic importance, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, perception of price inflation, and tourism development control.

Moderation analyses revealed that nationality significantly influenced respondents' perceptions of tourism impacts. In particular, foreign respondents tended to express more favourable views regarding tourism's contribution to local development and economic growth, while nationals were more sensitive to issues such as rising prices and economic leakage.

Additionally, the reason for visiting Porto (e.g., visiting for tourism purposes) was found to be a relevant moderating factor. Respondents who visited Porto for tourism-related reasons were more likely to perceive the effects of tourism positively, especially in terms of service quality, infrastructure, and overall urban experience. These findings highlight the nuanced ways in which individual background and motivation shape perceptions of tourism's socioeconomic impact.

Findings suggest that most residents acknowledge tourism as a key economic driver contributing positively to local employment and business development. However, participants expressed concerns about increased prices for housing and everyday goods. While tourism fosters entrepreneurship and attracts investment, there is also evidence of profit leakage, with financial gains often reinvested outside the local community. The results underline the need for stronger government regulation to ensure sustainable growth and equitable distribution of tourism benefits.

Research limitations: This study is limited to the city of Porto which may not fully represent the broader population. Future research could include comparative analyses across multiple cities.

Originality: This research adds to the ongoing discourse on sustainable urban tourism by providing an in-depth analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of tourism in a rapidly growing Southern European city — an area still underexplored in current literature. It addresses the gap by integrating the perspectives of both residents and tourists, and by highlighting the crucial role of reinvestment and regulatory measures in ensuring that tourism-driven benefits are equitable, inclusive, and sustainable over time.

Keywords: *Tourism impact; Urban destinations; Porto; Economic development; Resident perception; Sustainable tourism*

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Digital sustainability communication in Sports Tourism in Praia da Barra e Costa Nova

Comunicação digital de sustentabilidade no Turismo Desportivo da Praia da Barra e Costa Nova

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Abstract

Purpose: The objective of the study is to identify which dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic, sociocultural and institutional) are most emphasized and how collaboration between entities is reflected in the promotion of sustainable sports tourism. The study analyzes how coastal sports tourism stakeholders – namely companies and associations that offer nautical activities – communicate sustainability practices through digital platforms, in Praia da Barra and Costa Nova (Ílhavo, Portugal).

Methodology: From the social networks and websites of nine local organizations (companies, associations and municipality) a qualitative content analysis was carried out, with the support of the WebQDA software. The publications were coded according to the four dimensions of sustainability and their respective sub-dimensions according to the literature, in order to identify sustainable digital communication patterns.

Results: A total of 531 references for sustainable practices were identified. The most communicated dimension was the socio-cultural dimension (41%), with emphasis on the involvement of the community in water sports activities and enhancement of local heritage. The economic dimension was the least represented (14.7%). The most active organizations were SCNBB, Amigos do Oceano and the Municipality of Ílhavo, which highlighted events, partnerships and environmental awareness actions linked to sport.

Limitations: The study focuses on a regional and limited sample with a focus on public digital content. The study does not include the perception of the target audiences or the effectiveness of digital communication. The use of WebQDA is subject to the subjectivity of the user.

Originality: The study contributes with empirical evidence on how companies and public entities linked to coastal sports tourism communicate sustainability through digital means. It allows its replicability in other destinations and reinforces the role of digital communication in the sustainable management of tourism.

Keywords: *Sports tourism; Digital sustainability; Coastal tourism; Digital communication; WebQDA.*

Acknowledgments: This study was funded by the RRP - Recovery and Resilience Plan and by the NextGenerationEU funds of the University of Aveiro, under the Agenda for Business Innovation "ATT - Mobilizing Agenda to Accelerate and Transform Tourism" (Project no. 47 with application C645192610- 00000060).

Resumo

Objetivo: O objetivo do estudo é identificar quais dimensões da sustentabilidade (ambiental, económica, sociocultural e institucional) são mais enfatizadas e de que forma a colaboração entre entidades é refletida na promoção de um turismo desportivo sustentável. O estudo analisa como os *stakeholders* do turismo desportivo costeiro – nomeadamente empresas e associações que oferecem atividades náuticas – comunicam práticas de sustentabilidade através de plataformas digitais, na Praia da Barra e Costa Nova (Ílhavo, Portugal).

Metodologia: A partir das redes sociais e websites de nove organizações locais (empresas, associações e município) foi realizada uma análise qualitativa de conteúdo, com o apoio do software WebQDA. As publicações foram codificadas segundo as quatro dimensões da sustentabilidade e respetivas subdimensões conforme a literatura, de modo a identificar padrões de comunicação digital sustentável.

Resultados: Foram identificadas 531 referências a práticas sustentáveis. A dimensão mais comunicada foi a sociocultural (41%), com destaque para o envolvimento da comunidade em atividades desportivas aquáticas e valorização do património local. A dimensão económica foi a menos representada (14,7%). As organizações mais ativas foram SCNBB, Amigos do Oceano e a Câmara Municipal de Ílhavo, que destacaram eventos, parcerias e ações de sensibilização ambiental ligadas ao desporto.

Limitações: O estudo foca-se numa amostra regional e limitada com foco em conteúdos digitais públicos. O estudo não inclui a perceção dos públicos-alvo nem a eficácia da comunicação digital. O uso do WebQDA está sujeito à subjetividade do utilizador.

Originalidade: O estudo contribui com evidência empírica sobre como empresas e entidades públicas ligadas ao turismo desportivo costeiro comunicam sustentabilidade através de meios digitais. Permite a sua replicabilidade em outros destinos e reforça o papel da comunicação digital na gestão sustentável do turismo.

Palavras-Chave: *Turismo desportivo; Sustentabilidade digital; Turismo costeiro; Comunicação digital; WebQDA.*

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International Volunteering as a Regenerative Tourism Practice: A Cross-Border Perspective from the Iberian Peninsula

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper investigates the role of international volunteering as a regenerative tourism practice, focusing on its environmental, social, and symbolic impacts in cross-border regions of the Iberian Peninsula, particularly between Northern Portugal and Galicia.

Methodology: The study employs a mixed-methods design incorporating four comparative case studies. Data collection involved 28 semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and a structured survey with 35 international volunteers. Descriptive statistics, content analysis, and triangulation techniques were used to enhance validity.

Results: Findings reveal that international volunteers significantly contribute to ecological restoration, social cohesion, and positive destination image construction. Volunteers acted as symbolic agents, reinforcing narratives of authenticity and resilience through online content and personal testimonies. Quantitative results show increased sustainability awareness and stronger behavioural intentions (e.g. returning, recommending the destination). However, the regenerative impact varies according to project quality, continuity, and community integration.

Research limitations: The limited sample size and cross-sectional nature of the data restrict generalizability and long-term analysis. Future longitudinal and comparative studies are recommended to deepen understanding of regenerative mechanisms.

Originality: While regenerative tourism and volunteer tourism have been separately explored, few studies have examined the intersection between these paradigms in cross-border contexts. This research introduces a novel conceptual framework linking international volunteering, personal transformation, destination image, and behavioural intentions. It also expands the academic debate on peripheral tourism development and territorial regeneration.

Keywords: *International volunteering; regenerative tourism; destination image; cross-border cooperation; Iberian Peninsula*

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Perceived Benefits of Water Conservation Practices in Portugues Wine Tourism: A Gender and Regional Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: This article focuses on understanding which benefits most influence the adoption of water conservation practices by business decision makers. The study also examines whether male and female managers, as well as managers from different regions, perceive these benefits differently. Finally, it presents practical recommendations for policy and industry stakeholders, supporting more effective social marketing strategies that promote sustainable behaviours by addressing perceived benefits.

Methodology: This study employed a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires administered to managers or representatives of 122 Portuguese wine tourism companies. Descriptive statistics and inferential analyses were used with IBM SPSS Statistics Version 29.0.

Results: Wineries prioritise water conservation practices that ensure long-term resilience, reduce costs, and enhance customer trust. Female decision-makers place greater emphasis on cost efficiency, suggesting a strategic outlook. Perceptions remain consistent across regions, indicating a shared understanding of sustainability benefits. External incentives, such as subsidies, appear less influential in driving adoption. These insights suggest that social marketing strategies should highlight internal business value and customer expectations to effectively promote sustainable water practices in wine tourism.

Research limitations: This study focuses on benefits perceived as determinants of water conservation practices, potentially overlooking other influential factors such as individual psychological variables (e.g. spiritual intelligence, personality traits), which may significantly impact pro-environmental behaviours. It does not account for the personal motivations and perceived barriers possibly hindering these practices, nor does it consider organisational characteristics like company size, possibly conditioning the implementation of sustainable practices.

Originality: This article offers original insights by focusing on water conservation as a specific dimension of sustainability within the wine tourism sector, as recommended by social marketing specialists. It highlights the practical and theoretical value of

understanding perceived benefits from the viewpoint of business decision-makers. It also studies the potential moderating role of gender and regional differences. The findings support more effective social marketing strategies and conservation practices. This contributes to advancing sustainable tourism and resource management in context-specific settings.

Keywords: *Wine Tourism; Water Conservation; Sustainability; Benefits; Social marketing.*

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Research on the relationship between tourism networks and the tourism experience: from a critical review of the literature to a framework for future research

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Abstract

Purpose: Networks have gained great prominence in tourism (Gu et al., 2024). So, too, has the tourist experience (Zhang & Walsh, 2020). Experience as a catalyst for tourism, from a systemic perspective, seems to be influenced by practices based on interaction and co-production (Kim et al., 2021; Zhang & Walsh, 2020). Networks are based on patterns of new production trends and services (Centobelli & Ndou, 2019; Seow et al., 2020) and may eventually contribute to better tourist experiences at the destination. This article aims to analyze, through a systematic literature review, which types of relationship between service suppliers' networks in tourism and the tourist experience have been studied and to provide guidelines for future research in this context.

Methodology: This bibliometric review analyses 87 articles from Scopus and Web of Science (2008-2024) to investigate this relationship gap, using VOSviewer for various analyses, including co-occurrence analysis. The bibliometric analysis is complemented by a content analysis to identify the main themes examined in the articles.

Results: Using VOSviewer for co-occurrence analysis, we identified three thematic clusters: destination management, sustainable development, and innovation networks. Despite theoretical interconnections, empirical evidence of networks' direct impact on tourist experience remains absent. The results of the study show that tourism networks emphasize the interconnection and relationships between the various players in the activity and that the tourist experience is an important factor in tourist satisfaction and the competitiveness of destinations. However, despite extensive research on tourism networks and tourist experiences separately, no studies examine their interconnection.

Hence, it was not possible to find evidence of the existence of a relationship between the existence of networks of tourism suppliers and the tourist experience and, therefore, new research routes are suggested to analyze the influences of these networks on the tourists' experience.

Research limitations: As limitations of this study, we can mention the lack of integration in the field of tourism network studies, the existence of different subfields of research and theoretical and methodological approaches, which makes it difficult to clearly analyze the fields of tourism networks and, consequently, their relationship with the tourist experience. Another limitation is that the content analysis was carried out manually, without the use of software.

Originality: This is the only literature review on studies focusing on coopoerative networks and tourist experiences.

Keywords: *Tourism; tourist experience; networks; co-creation; experience; systematic literature review; bibliometric analysis; content analysis.*

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Barriers to digital inclusion in hospitality booking for People with Disabilities

Barreiras à inclusão digital na reserva de serviços de hospitalidade para pessoas com deficiência.

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Abstract

Purpose: This research explores the constraints faced by people with impairments (PwI) when using online lodging reservation platforms within the hospitality sector. Using findings from a focus group held in Portugal, we employed qualitative content analysis to capture and interpret participants' lived experiences. Our assessment uncovered several common themes—such as insufficient website navigation, absence of clear information regarding room accessibility features, and inadequate compatibility with assistive technologies—all that together diminish users' independence and confidence while planning trips.

Methodology: A mixed-methods approach was adopted. First, a qualitative focus group was conducted in March 2023. Findings informed a subsequent quantitative survey (n = 200) based on W3C Web Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), distributed between October 2024 and March 2025. Data were analyzed using content analysis, t-tests, Mann–Whitney tests, and regression analysis.

Results: The study identified critical digital barriers in booking platforms—uncertainty of accessibility information, limited customisation, and inconsistent WCAG compliance. PwD reported higher awareness of accessibility features and, despite encountering more barriers, expressed comparable or greater satisfaction than non-disabled users.

Research limitations: The convenience and snowball sampling limit generalizability. Future research should include larger, more diverse PwD samples and extend to other stages of the guest cycle.

Originality: This study bridges a gap by integrating lived experiences of PwD with quantitative WCAG compliance assessments, offering both theoretical and practical insights for a more inclusive hospitality sector.

Keywords: *People with disabilities; Online platforms; Hospitality sector; Web accessibility; WCAG*

Resumo

Objetivo: Esta investigação explora as restrições enfrentadas por pessoas com deficiência (PcD) ao utilizarem plataformas de reserva de alojamento online no setor da hospitalidade. Com base em conclusões de um *Focus Group* realizado em Portugal, adotámos uma análise de conteúdo qualitativa para recolher e analisar as experiências vividas pelos participantes. Os resultados revelaram vários temas comuns — como navegação insuficiente nos websites, ausência de informação clara sobre as características de acessibilidade dos quartos e compatibilidade inadequada com tecnologias de assistência — que, em conjunto, diminuem a independência e a confiança dos utilizadores ao planear viagens.

Metodologia: Adotou-se uma abordagem mista. Primeiro, realizou-se um estudo qualitativo - *Focus Group* que decorreu em março de 2023. As conclusões deste deram lugar à realização de um inquérito quantitativo (n = 200), baseado nas Diretrizes de Acessibilidade para Conteúdos Web (WCAG) do W3C. Estes questionários foram aplicados entre outubro de 2024 e março de 2025. Os dados foram analisados através de análise de conteúdo, testes t, testes de Mann–Whitney e análise de regressão.

Resultados: O estudo identificou barreiras digitais críticas nas plataformas de reserva — incerteza relativamente à informação de acessibilidade, personalização limitada e conformidade inconsistente com as WCAG. As PcD relataram maior conhecimento das funcionalidades de acessibilidade e, apesar de enfrentarem mais barreiras, expressaram níveis de satisfação comparáveis ou superiores aos dos utilizadores sem deficiência.

Limitações: A amostragem por conveniência limita a generalização dos resultados. Estudos futuros deverão incluir amostras maiores e mais diversificadas de PcD e abranger outras fases do ciclo de estadia dos hóspedes.

Originalidade: Este estudo preenche uma lacuna ao integrar as experiências vividas pelas PcD com avaliações quantitativas de conformidade com as WCAG, oferecendo tanto perspetivas teóricas como práticas para um setor da hospitalidade mais inclusivo.

Palavras-Chave: *Pessoas com deficiência; Plataformas online; Setor da hospitalidade; Acessibilidade web; WCAG.*

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Session VIII – "Rethinking Tourism through Sustainability, Risk and Systemic Change"

Chair: Márcia Lemos

ISAG – European Business School and Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC)

Lovingness and (Auto)Poiesis of Complex Tourism Ecosystems – Propositions for an Ecosophical Epistemology of Tourism and Hospitality in Times of Catastrophes and Risk Operations

Amorosidade E (Auto)Transpoiese De Ecossistemas Turísticos Complexos - Proposições para uma Epistemologia Ecosófica do Turismo e da Hospitalidade em Tempo de Catástrofes e de Operações de Risco

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Abstract

Objective: A reflective essay within the epistemological dimension of Science, aiming to propose an Ecosophical Epistemology of Tourism, based on the assumptions of *amorosity* as an ethics of relationship and care, and (auto)transpoiesis, in the sense of autopoiesis as proposed by biologist Humberto Maturana, expanded to open and transversal systems.

Methodology: Developed based on two methodological strategies with an ecosystemic, complex, and holistic orientation, named *Cartography of Knowledges* and *Rhizomatic Matrices*, developed by Baptista (in Baptista & Eme, 2023). These are strategies for guiding and directing qualitative studies, with procedural and plurimetodological operability, within a rhizomatic web-plot logic.

Results: The epistemological and methodological assumptions presented in the text have guided several studies in the field of Tourism and Hospitality in Brazil, conducted by Amorcomtur! —the Study Group on Tourism, Amorosity, and Autopoiesis—based at the University of Caxias do Sul, in Southern Brazil. These include studies on the Amazon ecosystem, with direct links and partnerships with institutions in the state of Amazonas, in Northern Brazil. These are studies with significant social impact, resulting in projects applied in various tourism ecosystems, and yielding remarkable empirical results, with partnerships involving researchers from over 15 countries and shared publications, both nationally and internationally.

Originality: The work involves an innovative approach to Tourism from an epistemological perspective and also highlights the importance of evolving strategies and research procedures. It advocates for an integration of reason and emotion, objectivity and subjectivity. It aligns with the assumptions of the transformation of Contemporary Science.

Keywords: *Tourism Ecosystems; Amorosity; (Auto)Transpoiesis; Hospitality; Ecosophy; Catastrophes.*

Resumo

Objetivo: Ensaio reflexivo na dimensão epistemológica da Ciência, visando a propor uma Epistemologia Ecosófica do Turismo, tendo como pressupostos amorosidade, como ética da relação e do cuidado, e (auto)transpoiese, em sentido autopoiese, proposta pelo biólogo Humberto Maturana, ampliada para sistemas abertos e transversais,

Metodologia/Metodología: Desenvolve-se com base em duas estratégias metodológicas, de orientação ecossistêmica, complexa, holística, denominadas Cartografia dos Saberes e Matrizes Rizomáticas, desenvolvidas por Baptista (in Baptista; Eme, 2023). Trata-se de estratégias de orientação e direcionamento para estudos qualitativos, com operacionalidade processual e plurimetodológica, em uma lógica de teia-trama rizomática.

Resultados: Os pressupostos epistemológicos e metodológicos apresentados no texto têm pautado vários estudos na área do Turismo e Hospitalidade no Brasil, do Amorcomtur! Grupo de Estudos em Turismo, Amorosidade e Autopoiese, da Universidade de Caxias do Sul, no Sul do Brasil, e estudos sobre o ecossistema amazônico, com vinculação direta e parceria com instituições do estado do Amazonas, no Norte do Brasil. São estudos de forte impacto social, que resultam em projetos aplicados em diversos ecossistemas turísticos e também de marcantes resultados empíricos, com parcerias com pesquisadores com mais de 15 países e publicações compartilhadas, nacional e internacionalmente.

Originalidade: envolve inovação da abordagem do Turismo no sentido epistemológico e também sinaliza para a importância das mutações das estratégias e procedimentos de investigação, com orientação para associação entre razão e emoção, objetividade e subjetividade. Alinha-se a pressupostos da mutação da Ciência Contemporânea.

Palavras-Chave: *Ecossistemas Turísticos, Amorosidade, (Auto)Transpoiese, Hospitalidade, Ecosofia, Catástrofes.*

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Exploring Generational Differences in Attitudes Toward Nature

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Abstract

Purpose: Based on the two dominant attitudes to nature, anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, which have been identified in tourism literature, the purpose of the study is to measure the attitudes toward Nature of nature-based tourists through different generations, namely Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z. Specifically, the study intents to measure the ecocentric attitudes that recognizes the intrinsic value of nature, and the anthropocentric attitude which consider that nature has value because of what it can contribute to the satisfaction of human wants (Thompson & Barton, 1994; Page & Dowling, 2002).

Methodology: An empirical study was conducted using an online survey questionnaire which comprised two sections. The first section included demographic variables and travel characteristics. The second section comprised 11 question-statements (5-point Likert scale) adapted from valid scales from the Xu and Fox (2014) work.

The unit of analysis was domestic tourists aged >18 years who had visited natural and protected areas within the three months preceding the data collection period (June–August 2024).

A total of 860 valid questionnaires was collected, distributed by the generation cohort: Baby Boomers (n=138), Generation X (n=212), Generation Y (n=199) and Generation Z (n=311).

Results: The findings reveal a strong ecocentric tendency through all generations and the Generation Y has the lowest anthropocentric attitude. Baby Boomers and Generation Z have significantly higher anthropocentric tendencies compared to generations X and Y. Moreover, there are no significant differences between the generations Baby Boomers and Generation Z. The same was true between generations X and Y.

The results are in line with literature review because Generation Y is the most environmental conscious generation. On the other hand, the strong ecocentric tendency across all generations could have resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic which created more awareness of Nature's value.

Research limitations: Like any other study, this study is not free from limitations, and the main one is the fact that the study only considers domestic tourists. Also, the quantitative approach could limit the results.

Originality: There is no evidence of studies that measure the ecocentric and anthropocentric attitudes toward Nature of nature-based tourists of Generation Z, Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers at the same time.

Keywords: *Nature-based Tourism; Attitudes; Anthropocentrism; Ecocentrism.*

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The commitment to sustainability in European Green Capitals and its impact on tourism

O compromisso com a sustentabilidade e o seu impacto no turismo: o caso das Capitais Verdes Europeias

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Abstract

Purpose: Understand how the European Green Capital Award can influence the tourism dynamics of cities committed to sustainability.

Methodology: Exploratory research, based on a review of literature and institutional information on the European Green Capital Award, from the perspective of its purpose, the application process, the actions carried out by the winning cities and the potential benefits associated with this type of award. In the future, we intend to develop an empirical study based on the case of Guimarães, the Portuguese city that will be the European Green Capital in 2026.

Results: Preliminary results show that the European Green Capital prize recognises cities' commitment to adopting an environmentally sustainable path. This presupposes a strategy oriented towards sustainable development and the green transition prior to the candidacy itself, accompanied by an action plan and initiatives aiming to impact the territory in terms of its internal dynamics and its projection abroad — a factor with which tourism is intimately connected.

Research limitations: The nature of the study only allows us to present preliminary insights that will later be incorporated into empirical research.

Originality: The goal of being recognised as a model green city and being associated with the European Green Capital distinction involves making choices and promoting a shared commitment, as well as inducing territorial and dynamic transformations whose impact is worth tracking and understanding. In the case of tourism, this will also enable us to address a gap in the scientific literature.

Keywords: *Sustainability; Sustainable Tourism; Place Branding; Territorial Reputation; European Green Capital.*

Resumo

Objetivo: Compreender como é que o prémio Capital Verde Europeia pode impactar as dinâmicas turísticas das cidades que assumem um compromisso com a sustentabilidade.

Metodologia: Pesquisa exploratória, a partir da revisão de literatura e informação de cariz institucional, sobre a atribuição do prémio Capital Verde Europeia, na perspetiva do seu propósito, processo de candidatura, ações desenvolvidas pelas cidades premiadas e dos potenciais benefícios associados a este tipo de distinção. Futuramente pretende-se desenvolver um estudo empírico a partir do caso de Guimarães, a cidade portuguesa que será Capital Verde Europeia no ano de 2026.

Resultados: Resultados preliminares evidenciam que a atribuição do prémio Capital Verde Europeia reconhece o empenho das cidades em adotarem a via da sustentabilidade ambiental, o que pressupõe uma estratégia que, antecedendo a própria candidatura, é orientada para objetivos que comprometem o território com o desenvolvimento sustentável e a transição verde, acompanhada por um plano de ação e de iniciativas que visam ter impacto no território, ao nível das suas dinâmicas internas, mas também da projeção para o exterior, a que o turismo não é alheio.

Limitações do estudo: A natureza do estudo permite apenas apresentar insights preliminares que serão posteriormente integrados na investigação empírica.

Originalidade: O objetivo de ser reconhecida como um modelo de cidade verde, associada à distinção de Capital Verde Europeia, pressupõe fazer escolhas, promover um compromisso partilhado e induzir transformações no território e nas suas dinâmicas, cujo impacto interessa rastrear e compreender, e que no caso particular do turismo permitirá também responder a uma lacuna na literatura científica.

Palavras-Chave: *Sustentabilidade; Turismo Sustentável; Place Branding; Capital Verde Europeia.*

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From uncertainty to growth: the impact of COVID on regional efficiency and productivity

De la incertidumbre al crecimiento: El impacto del COVID en la eficiencia regional

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to evaluate efficiency and productivity indicators at both national and regional levels within the empirical framework of Spanish hotel enterprises, given the sector's significant role in the tourism industry. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic posed substantial challenges for businesses in this sector.

Methodology: In this study we used the non-parametric frontier methodology and Malmquist productivity indices to evaluate national and regional efficiency levels and examine the evolution of productivity within the Spanish hotel sector from 2014 to 2021, following the COVID-19 health crisis.

Results: The findings reveal that Asturias, Castilla-León, and Cantabria rank among the most efficient regions, highlighting that productivity shifts are largely attributable to variations in efficiency. Additionally, in 2021, the removal of COVID-19-related restrictions facilitated substantial investments by hotel enterprises, resulting in significant technological advancements.

Research limitations: Alternative approaches to conducting comparable research may involve employing diverse methodologies, including parametric frontier models and artificial neural networks, among others. Furthermore, extending this research to other national contexts would enhance its applicability and contribute to a broader understanding of the subject.

Originality: Contrary to initial expectations, the pandemic ultimately had a beneficial impact on productivity, driven by improved technological innovation and a more optimized operational scale.

Keywords: *Tourism industry; Hotel firms; COVID-19 pandemic; Regional efficiency; Productivity; Malmquist productivity indices.*

Resumen

Objetivo: Este estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar los indicadores de eficiencia y productividad a nivel nacional y regional en el marco empírico de las empresas hoteleras españolas, dado el importante papel del sector en la industria turística. Además, la pandemia de COVID-19 planteó importantes desafíos para las empresas de este sector.

Metodologia: En este estudio, utilizamos la metodología de frontera no paramétrica y los índices de productividad de Malmquist para evaluar los niveles de eficiencia nacional y regional y examinar la evolución de la productividad en el sector hotelero español de 2014 a 2021, tras la crisis sanitaria de la COVID-19.

Resultados: Los resultados revelan que Asturias, Castilla y León y Cantabria se encuentran entre las regiones más eficientes, y los cambios en la productividad se deben en gran medida a variaciones en la eficiencia. Además, en 2021, la eliminación de las restricciones relacionadas con la COVID-19 facilitó importantes inversiones por parte de las empresas hoteleras, lo que se tradujo en importantes avances tecnológicos.

Limitaciones: Otros enfoques alternativos para realizar investigaciones en este ámbito pueden implicar el empleo de diversas metodologías, como modelos de frontera paramétrica y redes neuronales artificiales, entre otras. Además, se podría extender esta investigación a otros contextos nacionales para mejorar su aplicabilidad y contribuir a una mayor comprensión del tema.

Originalidad: Contrariamente a las expectativas iniciales, se constata que la pandemia tuvo un impacto positivo en la productividad, impulsado por una mayor innovación tecnológica y una escala operativa más optimizada.

Palabras Clave: *Industria turística; Empresas hoteleras; Pandemia COVID-19; Eficiencia regional; Productividad; Índices de productividad de Malmquist.*

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Session IX – "Motivations, Destination Dynamics and Social Dimensions of Tourism"

Chair: Yago Atrio Lema

Universidad de Santiago de Compostela and Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC)

Comparative analysis of the competitiveness and tourism efficiency of the Mediterranean regions

Análisis comparativo de la competitividad y eficiencia turística de las regiones del Mediterráneo

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Abstract

Purpose: To analyze and compare tourism competitiveness and efficiency of Mediterranean regions at the NUTS2 level.

Methodology: The study applies, firstly, principal component analysis, followed by a hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's method to identify homogeneous regional groups. Secondly, an efficiency analysis is conducted through DEA (output-oriented CCR model)

Results: The cluster analysis identifies two main groups of regions: those with a consolidated tourism profile (Western Europe) and others with emerging potential (North Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe). In terms of efficiency, 30 regions are positioned on the efficient frontier, while the rest show room for improvement. Additionally, some regions display discrepancies between their level of tourism consolidation and their functional efficiency.

Originality: This pioneering work offers a regional comparative analysis of tourism competitiveness and efficiency for 65 Mediterranean regions. It provides a robust methodological framework that integrates multivariate techniques with nonparametric analysis, offering a dual perspective: structural and functional.

Keywords: *Cluster Analysis; Data Envelopment Analysis; Mediterranean regions; Synthetic Index of Tourism Competitiveness; Tourism competitiveness; Tourism efficiency.*

Resumen

Objetivo Analizar y comparar la competitividad y eficiencia turística de las regiones del Mediterráneo a nivel NUTS2.

Metodología: El estudio aplica un enfoque cuantitativo y comparativo en dos fases. En la primera, se utiliza análisis de componentes principales (PCA), seguido de un análisis clúster jerárquico con el método de Ward, para identificar grupos regionales homogéneos. En la segunda fase, se implementa un análisis de eficiencia mediante DEA (modelo CCR orientado a outputs), evaluando la conversión de recursos turísticos en resultados.

Resultados: El análisis clúster identifica dos grandes grupos de regiones: unas con perfil turístico consolidado (Europa occidental) y otras con potencial en desarrollo (norte de África, Oriente Medio y Europa oriental). En eficiencia, 30 regiones se sitúan en la frontera eficiente, mientras que el resto muestra margen de mejora. Asimismo, algunas regiones presentan discrepancias entre su nivel de consolidación turística y su eficiencia funcional.

Originalidad: Este trabajo es pionero al realizar un análisis comparativo regional, para 65 regiones del Mediterráneo, de competitividad y eficiencia turística. Aporta un marco metodológico robusto que integra técnicas multivariantes, con análisis no paramétrico. ofreciendo una visión dual: estructural y funcional.

Palabras Clave: *Análisis de clústeres; Análisis envolvente de datos; Competitividad turística; Eficiencia turística; Índice sintético de competitividad turística; Regiones mediterráneas*

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Exploratory Study of Nature Tourist Awareness and Commitment to Destination Sustainability

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Abstract

Purpose: To explore the nature of sustainable tourist awareness and its potential as a determinant of the commitment to the sustainable development of the destination visited.

Methodology: The information source is a survey conducted to people over 18 years who have undertaken nature-based tourism in the last 12 months. Main components and multiple regression are the statistical techniques used.

Results: The nature tourist awareness regards the three traditional strands: economic, sociocultural, and environmental, and a fourth component appears regarding negative consequences of nature tourism. A more conscious nature tourist is a more engaged tourist, with a behaviour aligned with the sustainable development needs of the destination visited.

Research limitations: This is exploratory research, focuses solely on particular nature tourists that should extend to confirming measurement and structural models.

Originality: This work explores the role of nature tourists in sustainable development through their behaviour. How do nature tourists act in line with their conscience to support the sustainability of the destinations they visit?

Keywords: *Tourist Sustainable Awareness, Tourist Sustainable Behaviour, Nature-Based Tourism.*

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How Culture Shapes Decision-Making

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the article is to introduce and validate a new causal framework that explains how culture influences the formation of decision-makers' preferences, which in turn guides how trade-offs are resolved between conflicting alternatives (Yates & Oliveira, 2020). By modeling these preferences using cultural dimensions and testing them on a dataset of tourist route choices, the study offers a link between cross-cultural analysis and rational choice theory.

Methodology: To reach our main objective, we employed multinomial logistic models (Train, 2009). This model considered both individual and alternative-specific variables, that enabled us to capture the complexity of the decision-making process faced by pilgrims. Cultural dimensions were incorporated through the three main cultural frameworks (Hofstede, 1980), (Inglehart, 1997) and (Schwartz, 1994)

Results: The results showed that cultural dimensions impacted significantly route choices of Saint James Way. All models confirmed that cultural frameworks influence how pilgrims select their routes based on their alternative specific variables, and these patterns were consistent across national and supranational cultural groups.

Originality: The originality of the paper lies in the integration of the three main cultural frameworks into a quantitative model to understand how individuals resolve trade-off dilemmas. On the contrary of traditional studies that rely on the comparison of two cultures this research examines national and supranational cultural grouping. Finally, it introduces a new causal structure to formalize the introduction of culture in the traditional manner of resolving choice conflicts.

Keywords: *Cultural Dimensions; Decision-Making; Rational Choice Theory; Tourist Route Selection; Cross-Cultural Analysis.*

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Exploring the hospitality wage gap by gender and origin: Still waiting for change

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Abstract

Purpose: In this paper we explore wage discrimination in the hospitality subsector by gender and origin in Spain, since many employees in this sector are women and immigrants. The hotel and catering industry is one of the most important sectors in the tourism sector in terms of the number of workers, as the hotel and catering industry in Spain generates 66.6% of all tourism workers (Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration, 2024). Employ groups such as young people, women and foreigners. Unfortunately, this is a sector with a high level of precariousness. Likewise, the importance of this subsector is crucial because if there were no restaurant and hotel sector, we would not have tourism. When we talk about quality and sustainability in the tourism sector, we have to talk about quality and sustainability in the hospitality subsector and its human capital.

But in general terms, this is not the case. The sector is immersed in precariousness. Baum, (2018) and Robinson et al. (2019) point out that it is necessary to analyze the precariousness, sustainability and social dimension of tourism workers and propose different objectives that should be achieved to achieve sustainability of human resources in tourism and reduce the existing labor instability in the sector.

This precariousness is not only in wages but often in working conditions. According to McConell and Brue (2003) economic discrimination includes worse treatment in hiring, access to employment, promotions, wages or working conditions (types of contract, shifts, etc.). The study by Casado-Díaz et al. (2022) points out that tourism workers in Spain, particularly those employed in the hospitality industry, work under more unstable working conditions than in other sectors. There are more part-time and seasonal contracts related to seasonality, low wages, long hours, work on public holidays, high turnover rates, among others.

Job satisfaction is linked to work motivation and therefore to the productivity of its workers. But not only that, good or acceptable working conditions are necessary for the human capital of the hospitality industry to be able to serve tourists with the necessary attitude towards good customer service. Tourist experiences must be positive for them to repeat and recommend the destination, and quality service in this subsector is highly appreciated.

For all these reasons, it is very important to analyze the existing wage differences in the hotel and catering industry and the factors that influence these differences. Thus, we realize the wage decomposition for all subgroups, hospitality and the rest of the economy

and within hospitality, male-female and all possible combinations with respect to origin, native male, immigrant male, native female and immigrant female.

Methodology: Using the Survey of Wage Structure 2022 (National Institute of Statistics, INE, Spain the methodology used is Oaxaca (1973) between groups. As a result of the model, a distinction can be made between observable factors affecting the wage gap and unobservable factors. The unobservable factors are attributed to discrimination.

As indicated by Jann (2008) we will use the two-stage decomposition.

Eq.1 R= [E(X_a)-E(X_b)] β_b+X_a (β_a-β_b)
Eq.2. R=Q+U
Eq.3. Q=[E(X_a)-E(X_b)] β_b
Eq.4. 〖U=X〗_a (β_a-β_b)
Eq.5. and β_a=β^*+δ_a β_b=β^*+δ_b

The variables specified in the model were: job characteristics, level of responsibility, part-time and temporary contracts. Personal characteristics included seniority and years of study.

For the selection of variables we have carried out on the one hand an analysis of the selection of variables, firstly and in accordance with the existing literature it was analyzed stepwise the possibility of incorporating into the decomposition the variables of years of study, seniority, responsibility, part-time, temporary contract, woman, migrant, company with less than 50 workers and the occupation groups taking as reference the first (years of study, seniority, responsibility, part-time, temporary contract, woman, migrant, size less than 50 workers and the occupation groups, second third and fourth), the method discarded part-time due to multicollinearity and temporary Contract. Following Huberty's (1989) recommendations, VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) analysis was performed to ensure that there was no collinearity between the selected variables.

Results: The results of this analysis indicate the presence of significant differences in the pay gap between the groups considered. In the case of natives and immigrants, the gap is smaller, while between men and women the gap is larger and more significant. In the native-migrant comparison the unexplained difference is negative, meaning that, after taking into account the observable differences between the two groups, the reference group (in this case natives) performs even more favorably compared to what would be expected based on observable differences alone.

It seems that for the native/non-native gap, education, responsibility and seniority are the most explanatory factors for the differences, while in the case of men and women it is responsibility which is consistent with the literature reviewed, as it seems that there is a vertical segregation by levels of responsibility as also reported by Casado-Díaz et al. (2022).

Also in the wage differences between groups it is worth noting that wage gaps are more affected by gender than by origin. Clearly, native men seem to have better wage conditions than the other groups. Among the variables observed, low responsibility and level of education seem to be the most explanatory of wage differences.

Research limitations: This study has some limitations, such as some personal characteristics that, as we have seen in the literature, could be relevant, such as whether workers have children or dependents, information that does not appear in our data source and that could be included in other studies with more available variables.

Originality: It can be seen that segmentation into smaller groups that share more than one characteristic can help us improve our understanding of what is happening in labour market in hospitality sector in the post covid age. This period has been a revulsive for

this subsector due to the large increase in tourist demand due to the champagne bottle effect and, therefore, an increase in the demand for human tourism capital.

Keywords: *Wages Gap; Oaxaca-Blinder; Gender; Immigrants; Hospitality; Discrimination.*

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Religious tourism and Holy Week: an exploratory study of motivational profiles

Turismo religioso y Semana Santa: un estudio exploratorio de los perfiles motivacionales

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Abstract

Purpose: The main objective of this work is to identify and characterize the different motivational profiles of tourists who visit Easter Week, fundamental knowledge to design tourism products and services adjusted to their different motivations, seeking to guarantee their satisfaction.

Methodology: The methodology includes an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to detect the underlying motivational dimensions, followed by a cluster analysis to classify tourists into homogeneous groups. These analyses are complemented by ANOVA tests and cross-tabulations to determine significant differences between clusters.

Results: The results identify five motivational factors - religious devotion, nature, culture, leisure and savings - and five distinct tourism clusters with unique characteristics. These findings contribute to the academic field of religious tourism by offering practical implications for local authorities and tourism stakeholders.

Research limitations: A fundamental limitation of this study lies in the representativeness of the sample, as non-probability convenience sampling was used, which can lead to selection biases. Consequently, the results obtained should be interpreted with caution.

Originality: Although there are studies that analyze the various motivations of religious tourists, there is a research gap in terms of tourists visiting during Holy Week. The results of this work contribute to the academic field of religious tourism offering practical implications for local authorities and tourism agents since promotion and management strategies adapted to the specific motivations of these typologies of tourists can improve visitor satisfaction, reinforce positioning as a religious and cultural destination and promote sustainable tourism development aligned with the motivations of each identified segment.

Keywords: *Religious tourism; Holy week; Tourism motivations; Exploratory factor analysis; Cluster analysis*

Resumén

Objetivo: El objetivo principal de esta investigación es identificar y caracterizar los diferentes perfiles motivacionales de los turistas que visitan la Semana Santa, conocimiento fundamental para diseñar productos y servicios turísticos ajustados a sus diferentes motivaciones, buscando garantizar su satisfacción.

Metodología: La metodología incluye un análisis factorial exploratorio (AFE) para detectar las dimensiones motivacionales subyacentes, seguido de un análisis de conglomerados para clasificar a los turistas en grupos homogéneos. Estos análisis se complementan con pruebas ANOVA y tabulaciones cruzadas para determinar las diferencias significativas entre grupos.

Resultados: Los resultados identifican cinco factores motivacionales -devoción religiosa, naturaleza, cultura, ocio y ahorro- y cinco clusters turísticos distintos con características únicas. Estas conclusiones contribuyen al ámbito académico del turismo religioso al ofrecer implicaciones prácticas para las autoridades locales y los agentes del sector turístico.

Limitaciones: Una limitación fundamental de este estudio radica en la representatividad de la muestra, ya que se utilizó un muestreo no probabilístico de conveniencia que puede dar lugar a sesgos de selección. En consecuencia, los resultados obtenidos deben interpretarse con cautela.

Originalidad: Aunque existen estudios que analizan las diversas motivaciones de los turistas religiosos, existe un gap de investigación en cuanto a los turistas que visitan la Semana Santa. Los resultados de este trabajo contribuyen al campo académico del turismo religioso ofreciendo implicaciones prácticas para las autoridades locales y los agentes turísticos ya que las estrategias de promoción y gestión adaptadas a las motivaciones específicas de estas tipologías de turistas pueden mejorar la satisfacción de los visitantes, reforzar el posicionamiento como destino religioso y cultural y promover un desarrollo turístico sostenible alineado con las motivaciones de cada segmento identificado.

Palabras Clave: *Turismo religioso; Semana Santa; Motivaciones turísticas; Análisis factorial exploratorio; Análisis de conglomerados*

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Understanding Tourist Expenditure Through Motivational Drivers at a Major Urban Music Festival

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the expenditure behavior of tourists attending Primavera Sound Porto 2024, distinguishing between spending at the event and in the city of Porto. It investigates how tourist motivations, sociodemographic factors, and satisfaction influence their expenditure patterns. This research thus contributes to understanding the broader economic impact of a major urban music festival in a touristic city.

Methodology: A total of 1,216 valid responses were collected through in-person surveys conducted over three days of the Primavera Sound Festival in June 2024. Motivational factors (Borges et al., 2021) were identified using factor analysis, which revealed three distinct dimensions: Socialization, Familiar Musical Experience, and Musical Exploration. Tourist expenditure patterns were examined using both Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and Quantile Regression (QR) methods(Koenker & Bassett, 1978). The use of QR enabled the assessment of effects across different points in the expenditure distribution (Koenker et al., 2012).

Results: Findings indicate that festivalgoers' spending behavior is significantly influenced by sociodemographic factors, particularly gender (male) and age, both of which show a positive relationship with spending similar to the findings of Borges et al. (2016). Notably, age demonstrated quantile-specific effects, with older individuals among the highest spenders contributing more significantly to overall expenditures. Regarding motivational factors, two variables stood out: socialization and familiarity with musical acts. Attendees motivated by socialization tended to spend less during the event, whereas those who attended to see a familiar or favorite band were more likely to spend more. Finally, in terms of satisfaction, individuals who attended the festival multiple times in the past were less likely to spend money in the city and showed no significant difference in spending at the event. This may be due to their familiarity with the location, which could reduce the need for additional expenditure. In contrast, newcomers or less frequent attendees were more likely to spend money in the city.

Originality: This study is among the first to simultaneously examine both on-site and city-level tourist expenditures associated with a cultural event, addressing a critical yet underexplored dimension of visitor spending behaviour. By employing quantile regression — a methodological approach seldom used in this context — the research captures variations across the entire expenditure distribution. This dual analytical perspective offers a more comprehensive understanding often missed in prior studies, which tend to focus on average effects or isolate spending at a single location.. It contributes novel insights into the strategic alignment of events and city policies for maximizing economic returns. Practical implications are discussed for both festival organizers and city planners, including strategies to attract new visitor profiles and reinforce loyalty among returning attendees. The findings are especially relevant for cities leveraging festival tourism as part of their economic and cultural development.

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Session X – "Strategic Insights for Tourism Operations and Governance"

Chair: Jorge Lopes

ISAG – European Business School and Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC)

Conceptualising the Role of Hotels in the Events Sector: A Framework for Strategic Decisions

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Abstract

Purpose: Considering the growing engagement of hotels within the events sector, this paper seeks to critically examine and conceptualise the multifaceted roles that hotels may undertake in the context of events, with particular emphasis on their active participation in the design, planning, and delivery of event experiences.

Methodology: This study is based on a structured literature review, with the objective of critically examining existing academic contributions at the intersection of hospitality and event studies. The analysis focuses on peer-reviewed publications, books and book chapters, and master's degree final works. The review seeks to identify prevailing conceptualisations, thematic trends, and analytical frameworks that illuminate the strategic functions of hotels within the events sector. This approach allows for the construction of a comprehensive theoretical foundation from which the multifaceted roles of hotels in event contexts can be articulated and discussed.

Results: Drawing on the literature review, four distinct roles emerge that hotels may assume within the events sector, depending on the level and nature of their involvement in event design, planning, management, and production. These roles reflect varying degrees of strategic engagement and operational responsibility:

1. External Support – In this role, the hotel serves as a logistical enabler for externally organised events, that is, events held in venues outside the hotel. While the hotel is not directly involved in the organisation or delivery of the main event, it plays a crucial supporting function by providing accommodation for participants, organisers, and other stakeholders who require overnight stays. This role is particularly significant in the context of large-scale or mega-events, where the influx of event-related guests may stimulate the development of additional satellite events hosted by the hotel. In such cases, the hotel may subsequently

assume any of the remaining three roles outlined below, depending on its level of engagement and strategic intent.

2. Supplier – Here, the hotel operates as one of several service providers contracted by event organisers or agencies. The selection of the hotel is based on the availability and quality of its services, including accommodation, food and beverage provision, venue hire, entertainment, wellness facilities (e.g., spa), and other amenities. In this role, the hotel acts as a responsive, functional component within a broader event supply chain, without assuming primary organisational responsibility.

3. Event Manager – In this role, the hotel is directly commissioned to plan and deliver an event, either by designing it from inception or by operationalising a concept provided by the client. There is typically no intermediary event agency; rather, the client liaises directly with the hotel. The hotel assumes comprehensive responsibility for the coordination and execution of the event, positioning itself as a full-service event provider.

4. Event Owner – This role reflects the hotel's strategic initiative in creating and managing events for its own purposes, rather than on behalf of a client. Events developed under this model are designed to align with the hotel's business objectives, such as enhancing brand visibility, attracting new guests, reinforcing market positioning, face seasonality or generating additional revenue streams. In such cases, the hotel is both the conceptual and operational driver of the event, reflecting a proactive and entrepreneurial approach to event production.

Research limitations (if applicable)**:** The principal limitation of this study lies in its methodological scope, which is, at this stage of the research, exclusively theoretical. While the structured literature review provides a solid conceptual foundation, the absence of empirical data restricts the ability to validate and contextualise the proposed typology in real-world settings. Future research should therefore seek to complement this theoretical framework with empirical investigations, involving data collection from the various stakeholders engaged in the phenomenon. Such empirical work would enable a more nuanced understanding of how these roles manifest in practice and how they influence strategic and operational outcomes in different hospitality contexts.

Originality: The identification of these four conceptual roles provides hotels, hotel chains, and hotel groups with a structured framework through which to classify and interpret their involvement in the events they host or support. By systematically collecting and analysing data in relation to each of these roles, hospitality operators can assess the performance of individual units across these four dimensions. This, in turn, enables the development of informed and targeted business strategies that are aligned with the strategic positioning and objectives of each hotel, chain, or group. Thus, the originality of the present study lies in its structured conceptualisation, which offers a practical basis for the formulation of contextually appropriate and strategically aligned responses.

Keywords: *events; hotels; hospitality*

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Governance and Tourism: An Exploratory Analysis of the Effects on Business and Leisure Tourism

Governança e Turismo: Uma Análise Exploratória dos Efeitos no Turismo de Negócios e de Lazer

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Abstract

Purpose: This study analyses the effects of institutional quality on business tourism (BT) and its indirect impacts on leisure tourism (LT), based on a model that distinguishes the specific influences of different dimensions of governance (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2010). It aims to assess the mediating role of BT in the relationship between governance and LT, contributing to a more segmented and realistic understanding of tourism attractiveness.

Methodology: The empirical analysis is based on a sample of 128 countries with complete data for the year 2019, using structural equation modelling (SEM) and bootstrapping (2,000 samples) to ensure statistical robustness (Afthanorhan & Ahmad, 2014; Schumacker & Lomax, 2016). Six indicators from the *Worldwide Governance Indicators* were included: Political Stability, Regulatory Quality, Government Effectiveness, Rule of Law, Control of Corruption, and Voice and Accountability (Kaufmann et al., 2010). Tourism data were obtained from UNWTO (2022).

Results: The results show that Regulatory Quality has the strongest positive impact on BT (Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Park et al., 2014), while Government Effectiveness directly influences LT. BT acts as a mediating variable between governance and LT (Kulendran & Witt, 2003). However, unexpectedly negative effects of Political Stability and Voice and Accountability on BT were observed, suggesting that more centralised contexts may favour business decision-making due to their predictability (Hall, 2011; Marchesani & Masciarelli, 2025). Institutional governance accounts for 53.4% of the variance in BT and 74.2% in LT.

Research limitations: This study presents several limitations. The use of cross-sectional data restricts the ability to draw causal inferences, making it difficult to assess temporal relationships. Although geographically representative, the sample is relatively limited in light of the institutional and tourism diversity among the countries analysed, which may affect the generalisability of the findings. The lack of regional or institutional segmentation also prevents the identification of contextual patterns. Finally, the

exploratory nature of the model calls for future validation through longitudinal data and complementary methodologies.

Originality: The study offers an innovative contribution by proposing a theoretical model that distinguishes institutional impacts across different tourism segments. It introduces BT as a mediating variable, allowing for the capture of the indirect effects of governance on LT — an aspect still underexplored in the literature (Pinho & Marques, 2021). Furthermore, it highlights that not all dimensions of good governance yield positive impacts, challenging broad normative assumptions (Singh & Kaur, 2023; Xu et al., 2023). Finally, it provides relevant insights for the design of public policies aimed at strengthening tourism competitiveness in international markets.

Keywords: *Institutional governance; Business tourism; Leisure tourism; SEM; Public policy; International competitiveness.*

Resumo

Objetivo: Este estudo analisa os efeitos da qualidade institucional no turismo de negócios (BT) e os seus impactos indiretos sobre o turismo de lazer (LT), com base num modelo que distingue as influências específicas das diferentes dimensões de governação (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2010). Propõe-se avaliar o papel mediador do BT na relação entre governação e LT, contribuindo para uma compreensão mais segmentada e realista da atratividade turística.

Metodologia: A análise empírica baseia-se numa amostra de 128 países com dados completos para o ano de 2019, recorrendo à modelação de equações estruturais (SEM) e ao bootstrapping (2.000 amostras) para assegurar robustez estatística (Afthanorhan & Ahmad, 2014; Schumacker & Lomax, 2016). Foram incluídos seis indicadores dos *Worldwide Governance Indicators*: Estabilidade Política, Qualidade Regulatória, Efetividade Governamental, Estado de Direito, Controlo da Corrupção e Voz e Prestação de Contas (Kaufmann et al., 2010). Os dados turísticos foram obtidos da UNWTO (2022).

Resultados: Os resultados mostram que a Qualidade Regulatória tem o maior impacto positivo no BT (Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Park et al., 2014), enquanto a Efetividade Governamental afeta diretamente o LT. O BT atua como variável mediadora entre a governação e o LT (Kulendran & Witt, 2003). Contudo, observaram-se efeitos inesperadamente negativos da Estabilidade Política e da Voz e Prestação de Contas sobre o BT, sugerindo que contextos mais centralizados podem favorecer decisões empresariais devido à previsibilidade (Hall, 2011; Marchesani & Masciarelli, 2025). A governação institucional explica 53,4% da variância no BT e 74,2% no LT.

Limitações: Este estudo apresenta algumas limitações que devem ser consideradas. A utilização de dados transversais restringe a capacidade de inferência causal, dificultando a análise de relações temporais. A amostra, embora geograficamente representativa, é relativamente limitada face à diversidade institucional e turística dos países analisados, o que pode afetar a generalização dos resultados. A ausência de segmentações regionais ou institucionais também impede a identificação de padrões contextuais. Por fim, a natureza exploratória do modelo requer validações futuras com dados longitudinais e metodologias complementares.

Originalidade: O estudo inova ao propor um modelo teórico que distingue o impacto institucional entre diferentes segmentos turísticos. Introduz o BT como variável

mediadora, permitindo captar efeitos indiretos da governação sobre o LT — um aspeto ainda pouco abordado na literatura (Pinho & Marques, 2021). Além disso, evidencia que nem todas as dimensões da boa governação produzem impactos positivos, desafiando pressupostos normativos generalistas (Singh & Kaur, 2023; Xu et al., 2023). Por fim, oferece contributos relevantes para o desenho de políticas públicas orientadas para o reforço da competitividade turística em mercados internacionais.

Palavras-Chave: *Governança institucional; Turismo de negócios; Turismo de lazer; SEM; Política pública; Competitividade internacional.*

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Bibliometric analysis on "tourism" and competitiveness", from 2000 to 2023

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Abstract

Purpose: Tourist destinations are geographical areas with natural, cultural and built attractions that motivate visitors to travel in search of unique experiences, leisure, relaxation or knowledge. These spaces integrate a number of interdependent elements - such as infrastructure, services, hospitality, safety and accessibility - that together shape the tourist experience. In today's scenario, characterised by changing consumption patterns, technological advances and growing competitiveness between destinations, it is essential to understand the factors that contribute to a destination's attractiveness and performance in the global market. One of these factors is the competitiveness of tourist destinations, which is related to their ability to attract and satisfy tourists in a sustainable way and to maintain or increase their market share over time. Tourism competitiveness therefore involves a complex interaction between local resources, management strategies, public policies and visitor perceptions, and is a recurring and relevant theme in international academic literature.

Objective: The aim of this study is to analyse the panorama of scientific research on destination competitiveness published in the tourism literature between 2000 and 2023, using bibliometric analysis of data collected in the Scopus database.

Methodology: The method used was bibliometric, based on studies carried out in bibliographic databases. The analysis focused on the variable "competitiveness of tourist destinations", based on a set of three indicators: author, year of publication, journal. The main focus was on measuring the scientific productivity of these indicators, which made it possible to identify patterns, recurrences and trends in scientific production on the subject.

Results: The results showed that the variable under study is linked to several conceptual and practical dimensions, highlighting the multidisciplinary nature of destination competitiveness. It was observed that the scientific production on the subject has evolved significantly in terms of volume and analytical complexity, incorporating different approaches, ranging from comparative quantitative studies between destinations to qualitative studies focusing on the perceptions of stakeholders and tourists themselves. The analysis of the main authors and journals revealed the consolidation of research centres in certain countries, indicating a geographical concentration of knowledge, especially in regions with consolidated or rapidly developing tourism economies. The mapping of scientific production also made it possible to identify periods of greater intensity in the publication of studies, suggesting a correlation with global events that have affected the tourism sector, such as economic and health crises. In this context,

bibliometrics proved to be not only a tool for measuring scientific productivity, but also a strategic resource for revealing structural and epistemological dynamics in the field, contributing to a critical understanding of the state of the art and guiding future research agendas.

Limitations: The main limitation of the study is that the analysis was based on a single database (Scopus) and focused on a single variable. Future studies could broaden this scope by incorporating other scientific databases, analytical methods and variables related to tourism and competitiveness.

Originality: The study is original in that it systematically and quantitatively examines the scientific panorama of publications dealing with the competitiveness of tourist destinations from 2000 to 2023, providing a structured and up-to-date view of academic contributions and possible ways forward for research in the field of tourism.

Keywords: *Tourism; Destination Competitiveness; Tourism Strategies; Bibliometrics.*

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Theme Hotels and Cultural Heritage: Value and Experience in Hospitality

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Abstract

The emergence of themed hotels as an innovative strategy within the hospitality sector signifies a move towards the provision of unique and personalised experiences for guests. This approach extends beyond the provision of accommodation and decoration, incorporating components of tourism, hospitality and experience marketing to establish a more profound connection with the customer (Carvalho & Baptista, 2015; Franco et al., 2017; Henriques & Ramos, 2017). In the context of hotels that adopt literary themes, as exemplified by the Art and Soul Group, the cultural narrative emerges as a strategic instrument for attracting tourists, while concurrently augmenting the historical and cultural heritage of the locales in which they are situated. The association of literary themes with hotels has been demonstrated to enhance the guest experience and to play an important role in the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. In contexts where cultural and literary tourism is an important economic driver, these hotels become a link between local heritage and the experience of visitors, contributing to the strengthening of regional identities and the engagement of local communities (Carvalho & Baptista, 2015; Silva & Marques Júnior, 2016; Franco et al., 2017; Henriques & Ramos, 2017).

Objective: Theme hotels are emerging as an innovative strategy in the hospitality sector, promoting unique and personalised experiences for their guests. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the role of themed hotels as a strategy to promote cultural heritage in the hotel sector, based on three themed hotels of the Art and Soul Group - "A Lisboa de Pessoa Hotel", "Porto A.S. 1829 Hotel" and "Évora Oliva Hotel".

Methodology: The multiple case study method (Yin, 2018) was applied to three themed hotels in Portugal. The cases analysed belong to the Art and Soul Group and were selected for their adoption of literary themes in their projects. By combining aesthetic and functional elements inspired by classic and contemporary works, these hotels not only delight guests, but also contribute to the preservation and dissemination of literary heritage. This strategy, which will be analysed in detail in the following sections, demonstrates how themed hotels can act as agents of change in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Result: The results discuss elements such as the revitalisation of historic buildings, the creation of intercultural experiences and the strengthening of relationships with local communities. It also highlights the importance of specific training for teams and the integration of cultural tourism in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs), promoting sustainability and social engagement in the field of literary cultural tourism.

Themed hotels, especially those inspired by literary themes, represent a confluence of tourism, culture and experience marketing. This study has shown how these businesses, by combining creativity and authenticity, transcend the traditional role of hotels and become strategic elements in promoting destinations, enhancing cultural heritage and strengthening local communities. Analysis of the characteristics of themed hotels revealed their ability to create memorable experiences by exploring narratives that connect guests to the history and cultural identity of a place.

From an economic, social and cultural point of view, the benefits of these developments are obvious. Not only do they generate economic impact through tourism and job creation, but they also promise to promote the preservation and dissemination of cultural and historical elements. By working with local communities and adopting sustainable practices, these hotels reinforce their relevance as agents of positive change in the destinations where they are located. However, it is important to recognise the challenges associated with operating themed hotels. Maintaining the coherence of the theme, balancing innovation and authenticity, and responding to growing consumer expectations are key issues for long-term success. In addition, integration with the local community and a commitment to sustainability are crucial if these businesses are to make a real contribution to local development. It is therefore recognised that literary themed hotels have significant potential to add value to tourism and culture, but require strategic management that balances creativity, relevance and sustainability. The conclusion leads us to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of this hospitality model, highlighting the importance of adapting thematic strategies to market demands and local specificities, contributing to sustainable development and the preservation of cultural identity.

Limitations: The limitation is that only three themed hotels were studied, which could be an opportunity to compare this study with themed hotels in other countries.

Originality: The study is original because it examines the use of literary themes in hotels as a competitive differentiator in sustainable tourism. Furthermore, the relevance of this study lies in the growing interest in authentic and culturally significant experiences in contemporary tourism. Furthermore, integrating literary themes into hospitality has multiple benefits, from revitalising historic buildings to strengthening local economies and promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which focus on the preservation of cultural heritage.

Keywords: Tourism; Theme Hotels; Cultural Heritage; Hospitality and Leisure.

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The Balanced Scorecard in a local accommodation company

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Abstract

Purpose: This study focuses on the process of implementation of Balanced Scorecard (BSC) as a strategic management system in a Portuguese small and medium enterprise (SME) which operates in the hospitality sector.

Methodology: Through qualitative, practical and pragmatic research, a case study was conducted which resulted in a diagnosis of strategic management and the implementation of the BSC.

Results: The results indicate that the BSC has benefited the company as it has managed to integrate with the strategic management process, be compatible with other management tools, adapt to information technologies, increase the effectiveness of strategy communication and have the flexibility to adapt to the company's context. Aspects that have conditioned its implementation were the time constraints, the immaturity of the management control processes and the lack of validation of the cause-effect relationships of the strategic hypothesis formulated, which have prevented implementation from being finalized.

Originality: The research contributes to a broader understanding of the BSC implementation in accommodation enterprises, revealing its potential applicability to SMEs, as a strategic management system.

Keywords: *Balanced Scorecard; Local Tourism; Case Study; Small and Medium Enterprise; Management Accounting; Hospitality Management.*

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Session XI – "Governance, Segmentation and Competitive Landscapes"

Chair: Paula Rodrigues

ISAG – European Business School and Research Center in Business Sciences and Tourism (CICET – FCVC)

Understanding the impact of meteorological variables on disruptive weather affecting air travel patterns: the case of Madeira

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Abstract

Purpose: This study empirically investigates the impact of key meteorological variables—specifically wind shear and temperature—on airport unserviceability in Madeira, using both meteorological and tourism-related data

Methodology: The analysis employs simultaneous equation modeling (SiEM) with three-stage least squares (3SLS) regression to assess the endogenous relationship between the volume of affected passengers and critical meteorological factors.

Results: The results indicate that patterns of wind gustiness and temperature are key determinants of the occurrence of disruptive weather episodes. However, the overall degree of disruption is also influenced by tourism dynamics, as reflected in the increased number of passengers traveling through the airport.

Research limitations: This study is based on a single airport, and monthly data on a few selected and publicly available data. However, the results from this study are of interest for other airports facing similarities in terms of orographic and climatic backgrounds.

Originality: This study sequentially analyzes both meteorological and tourism-related data within a system of equations to assess the impact of disruptive weather and scale effects derived from the current tourism development dynamics on the total number of passengers travelling through the airport.

Keywords: *Disruptive weather; Meteorological variables; Airport; Tourism development; Stranded passengers; Madeira Island.*

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The economic impact of tourism: a multidimensional approach to understand the economic impact of a portfolio of events

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Abstract

Purpose: While existing tourism literature thoroughly explores the sector's contributions to regional development and economic performance, limited research focuses on the cumulative impact of a portfolio of events. This study aims to address this gap by examining how organizing multiple, thematically diverse events over time contributes to economic growth and sustainability. We investigate whether this event-based approach to tourism development can generate broader and more stable benefits than isolated event strategies, particularly in destinations that already rely on nature-based and cultural tourism assets.

Methodology: It was employed a quantitative methodology based on multilevel modeling, using a robust dataset of over 14,000 observations spanning from 2018 to 2024. The data integrate tourism performance indicators (e.g., number of tourist arrivals, proportion of purposeful visitors) with multidimensional metrics of sustainable development, including economic output, social progress (e.g., employment and community engagement), and environmental impact. The multilevel approach enables us to isolate contextual effects and evaluate both temporal and spatial variations across the studied period and regions.

Results: The analysis reveals a statistically significant association between the development of a portfolio of events and positive economic outcomes. Specifically, regions that implemented a strategic calendar of events, ranging from cultural festivals to sports and gastronomy, saw more consistent growth in tourism-related revenues, employment, and visitor retention. Furthermore, destinations that integrated underutilized cultural assets into their event strategies were able to enhance their appeal without overburdening their natural or infrastructural resources. These findings suggest that a portfolio-based strategy contributes not only to economic diversification but also to more sustainable and resilient tourism models.

Research limitations: This study is limited by its geographical focus on a single island region and its reliance on secondary data sources. While the multilevel approach controls for many contextual variables, some qualitative dimensions, such as community perceptions or long-term brand effects, remain unexplored. Further research should examine other regions and incorporate longitudinal qualitative insights to deepen understanding of how event portfolios affect social cohesion and cultural identity over time.

Originality: This research provides an original contribution by conceptualizing and empirically testing the economic and developmental impacts of event portfolios rather than individual events. It expands the discourse on sustainable tourism by incorporating multidimensional outcome variables and highlighting the strategic use of underexploited cultural assets. As such, it offers both theoretical advancement and practical guidance for policymakers and tourism developers seeking to create more balanced and resilient tourism offerings.

Keywords: *Tourism development; Economic growth; Events; Sustainable tourism; Cultural valorization; Multilevel analysis.*

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Working Capital and Financial Performance in Portuguese Accommodation Companies

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyse the impact of Working Capital on the Free Cash Flow of Portuguese companies that operate under the Division 55 Accommodation, and that represent the main companies in the tourism sector.

Methodology: The research used a sample of 2,227 companies, with a total of 26,689 observations between 2011 and 2023, obtained from the *Sistema de Análise de Balanços Ibéricos* database. A multiple linear regression was developed based on financial data from companies in Division 55 and 12 research hypotheses were formulated and tested, in order to analyse the impact of different components of working capital in determining the free cash flow of companies in the Accommodation sector.

Results: The variation in working capital proved to have a negative and statistically significant impact on the free cash flow of the companies analysed. It was also found that all the variables studied have a significant influence on the model, explaining around 60 per cent of the variation in Free Cash Flow.

Research limitations: The study focuses only on a specific sector, which may limit the generalisation of the results to other economic sectors.

Originality: This research contributes to the literature by empirically evaluating the relationship between working capital and free cash flow in the Accommodation sector in Portugal, which is a relevant sector for Gross Domestic Product and its companies are characterised by several specificities.

Keywords: *Working capital; Free cash flow; Accommodation sector; Financial management; Linear regression; Portuguese companies.*

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Tourism in Transition: Financial Sustainability as a Compass for Resilience

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyse the economic and financial sustainability of companies in the tourism sector in Portugal, focusing on Divisions 55 - Accommodation and 56 - Food and Beverage Service Activities, based on the Return on Assets (ROA) indicator, to identify performance differences over time, by firm size and across regions. The methodological choice to use ROA is due to its robustness and the possibility of comparison in longitudinal and cross-sectional evaluations.

Methodology: The analysis is based on a sample of 8,735 companies, corresponding to 113,559 observations between 2011 and 2023. The main variable used was Return on Assets (ROA). After checking for the absence of normality and homogeneity of variances, robust statistical methods were applied, namely Welch's ANOVA and the Games-Howell post hoc test using bootstrapping, in order to guarantee reliability in the inferences.

Results: The results showed statistically significant differences in the economic and financial sustainability of companies over the years, between companies of different sizes and between regions. Small companies had a higher average ROA than micro, medium and large companies. Regionally, the Algarve stood out for its better performance, unlike the Autonomous Region of the Azores, which recorded the worst average ROA results.

Research limitations: The analysis focused exclusively on quantitative financial performance indicators and did not include qualitative variables that could enrich the understanding of the factors that condition sustainability. Additionally, the lack of statistical normality and the heterogeneity of the sample limited the application of conventional parametric tests.

Originality: The study contributes to the literature by offering a longitudinal and regional perspective on financial sustainability in the tourism sector in Portugal (Divisions 55 - Accommodation and 56 - Food and Beverage Service Activities), with a robust approach. It also emphasises the role of small businesses as vectors of resilience and the importance of defining public policies that are differentiated according to territorial context.

Keywords: *Financial sustainability; Tourism; SMEs; ROA; Portugal; Regional performance*

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Smart Tourist Destinations for the Digital Nomad Era: Efficiency through Policy, Technology, and Well-being

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates how smart tourist destinations can enhance their competitiveness in attracting digital nomads by efficiently transforming policy, technological, and quality-of-life resources into successful tourism outcomes. It addresses a key question in tourism policy: how can destinations strategically combine digital transformation, visa innovation, and well-being to position themselves as attractive hubs for this new, technology-driven market segment?

Methodology: We adopt a dual-method approach. Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) evaluates the relative efficiency of countries in converting smart inputs (broadband speed and cost, rental prices) into digital nomad attraction (remote job search interest). Tobit regression modeling then analyses how policy factors (digital nomad visa programs, national happiness levels, migration openness, EU membership) impact efficiency scores. Data sources include global broadband metrics, visa policy databases, and the World Happiness Index.

Results: Results reveal that leading smart destinations (e.g., Canada, UK, Estonia, Portugal) excel through a balanced integration of high-speed digital infrastructure, visa flexibility, and strong happiness and well-being indicators. Countries with advanced infrastructure but restrictive policies or low happiness index (e.g., Germany, France) lag in efficiency. Tobit regression confirms that high happiness scores and the presence of working holiday visas significantly improve efficiency, underlining the need for a holistic strategy combining digital transformation, regulatory innovation, and well-being promotion

Research limitations: Findings rely on secondary data sources and use remote job search interest as a proxy for digital nomad flows. While suitable for large-scale benchmarking, this approach may not fully capture actual migration or spending patterns.

Originality: This study advances the SMART tourism literature by providing a robust, quantitative framework for assessing how destinations can strategically convert policy, technological, and well-being resources into competitiveness in the growing digital nomad market. It highlights the importance of integrating smart infrastructure, visa policy design, and happiness-driven well-being strategies to attract and retain this technology-enabled visitor segment.

Keywords: *Smart Tourist Destinations; Digital nomadism; Data Envelopment Analysis; Digital Transformation; Happiness Index; Tourism Competitiveness*

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Does Culinary Creativity Drive Tourists' Information Search and Destination Choice?

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine whether the search for information and the choice of a tourist destination are influenced by the perceived gastronomic creativity of that destination. Specifically, the research focuses on the case of Portugal, aiming to understand how creative culinary offerings may shape tourists' decisions and position the country as a compelling gastronomic tourism destination. In recent years, food has become a central element in the experiential value of travel, particularly in destinations seeking to differentiate themselves through local culture and authenticity (Kaur & Kaur, 2024; Soonsan, Phakdee-Aukson & Suksirisopon, 2023). While prior research has highlighted the role of gastronomy in tourism motivation and destination image (Akar, Ögel & Medetoglü, 2024), much of the existing literature has emphasized traditional elements such as food quality, authenticity, and cultural heritage (Sio, Fraser & Fredline, 2024). However, less attention has been given to the role of creativity in gastronomy, particularly in terms of its capacity to innovate, surprise, and emotionally engage tourists in new culinary experiences (Sio, Fraser & Fredline, 2024). This study addresses this gap by exploring how tourists perceive creative culinary elements, such as novel combinations of ingredients, unique food presentation, reinterpretation of traditional dishes, and visual appeal, and how these perceptions influence their information-seeking behavior and intention to choose a destination. In the context of Portugal's recent efforts to position its gastronomy as a strategic tourism asset, this research offers timely insights into how gastronomic creativity can contribute to destination attractiveness and competitive advantage.

Methodology: This study employed a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire to examine the relationship between perceived gastronomic creativity and tourists' information-seeking and destination choice behavior. The questionnaire was based on the validated scale developed by Horng and Lin (2009), which assesses culinary creativity across various dimensions, including ingredient quality and originality, sensory and visual appeal, and creative composition and presentation. The items were adapted to fit the context of tourism decision-making, with a five-point Likert-type scale used to measure participants' perceptions. The dependent variable captured whether respondents actively seek gastronomic information when choosing a tourist destination (binary: Yes/No). Data were collected through social media platforms, enabling access

to a diverse group of respondents with an interest in travel and gastronomy. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and all respondents provided informed consent prior to beginning the questionnaire. The study followed ethical research guidelines, ensuring the confidentiality and protection of participants' personal data in accordance with institutional and international standards. Responses were analyzed using logistic regression, given the binary nature of the dependent variable. The analysis tested whether the three main dimensions of gastronomic creativity—quality and gastronomic expression, sensory and visual appeal, and creative culinary composition—significantly predicted the likelihood that a tourist will seek information about a destination's gastronomy before travel.

Results: A logistic regression was conducted to examine the extent to which three constructs—Quality and Gastronomic Expression, Sensory and Visual Appeal, and Creative Culinary Composition—predict whether individuals seek information about a destination's gastronomy when choosing a tourist destination (binary outcome: Yes/No).

The overall model was statistically significant, as indicated by the Omnibus Test of Model Coefficients ($\chi^2(3) = 19.573$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that the set of predictors reliably distinguishes between those who do and do not seek gastronomic information when choosing a destination. The Hosmer and Lemeshow test was not significant ($\chi^2(8) = 9.590$, $p = 0.295$), indicating a good fit between the model and the data. Additionally, the classification table revealed an overall prediction accuracy of 84.9%, with a high correct classification rate for the "Yes" category (99.6%). However, the Nagelkerke R^2 value of 0.051 suggests that the model explains approximately 5.1% of the variance in the dependent variable, indicating a modest explanatory power.

Among the three predictors, only Sensory and Visual Appeal emerged as statistically significant predictors: Sensory and Visual Appeal ($B = 0.383$, $SE = 0.111$, Wald = 11.884, $p = 0.001$, $Exp(B) = 1.467$). This indicates that for each unit increase in sensory and visual appeal perception, the odds of seeking gastronomic information increase by approximately 46.7%, holding the other variables constant.

The other two predictors approached significance but did not reach conventional thresholds: Quality and Gastronomic Expression ($B = 0.179$, $p = 0.085$, $Exp(B) = 1.196$). This suggests a positive, though not statistically significant, relationship with the likelihood of seeking gastronomic information. Creative Culinary Composition ($B = 0.187$, $p = 0.090$, $Exp(B) = 1.205$). It also shows a positive trend but does not reach statistical significance.

The results suggest that sensory and visual aspects of gastronomy significantly influence whether tourists seek gastronomic information about a destination. Although quality and creativity in culinary composition also show positive associations, their effects were not statistically significant at 0.05. Future research could explore these dimensions further and consider additional factors to improve the model's explanatory power.

Originality: By investigating the link between gastronomic creativity and tourist decision-making, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of experiential consumption in tourism and provides practical implications for destination marketers, chefs, and tourism authorities aiming to enhance the culinary appeal of their regions. The findings of this study provide empirical support for the idea that gastronomic creativity plays a role in shaping pre-travel behavior, particularly the search for information about culinary offerings. Most notably, food's sensory and visual appeal emerged as a key factor influencing tourists' interest in gastronomy during the destination selection process. The study highlights the need for destinations to invest in their culinary offerings' visual and sensory presentation on-site and in digital media. Emphasizing local food's aesthetic and experiential qualities can increase visibility and engagement, particularly among tourists who actively seek unique and meaningful gastronomic experiences.

This study contributes to the emerging field of creative gastronomic tourism by empirically demonstrating that sensory and visual appeal significantly influences tourists' information-seeking behavior when choosing a destination. Scientifically, it extends previous research focused on food quality and authenticity by introducing gastronomic creativity, particularly its aesthetic and emotional dimensions, as a key factor in pre-travel decision-making. The findings validate the use of Horng and Lin's (2009) culinary creativity scale in a tourism context and highlight the need for future research to explore additional variables and modeling approaches (e.g., SEM, fsQCA) to better understand the complexity of gastronomic decision-making.

From a practical perspective, the results provide actionable insights for destination marketers, chefs, and tourism policymakers. Emphasizing the sensory and visual presentation of local cuisine, both on-site and through digital media, can increase engagement and enhance destination attractiveness. Gastronomic storytelling, creative reinterpretation of traditional dishes, and visually rich promotional content are recommended to appeal to experience-seeking tourists. The study supports the positioning of gastronomy as a strategic cultural and creative asset in national tourism development strategies, particularly in countries like Portugal, aiming to differentiate through culinary innovation.

Keywords: *Gastronomy; Creativity; Gastronomic Tourism Destination; Information Seeking; Logistic Regression; Portugal.*

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